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RULING IDEAS IN EARLY AGES

RULING IDEAS

IN EARLY AGES

AND THEIR RELATION TO

OLD TESTAMENT FAITH

LECTURES DELIVERED TO
GRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

BY

J. B. MOZLEY, D.D.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, AND CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH

New York
E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY
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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD BLACHFORD,

IN MEMORY OF COLLEGE DAYS,

WHEN HE FIRST LEARNT TO ESTIMATE

HIGH GIFTS OF MIND AND HEART,

THIS VOLUME

IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

CHRIST CHURCH, *Nov.* 23, 1876.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following course of ten Lectures was delivered to Graduates mostly engaged in tuition in Michaelmas and Lent terms, 1874-1875.

The Lecture on St. Augustine's controversy with the Manichæans is one of a previous course, but is added here as bearing closely upon the main subject of the present volume.

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LECTURE I.

ABRAHAM.

THE Patriarch Abraham comes before us in Scripture under the following main aspects:—

1. He comes before us as the introducer of a new and pure religious creed and worship—new, I say, for though the doctrine of one God was part of the primeval revelation, it had become much corrupted before Abraham's time. "Your fathers," said Joshua to the Israelites, "dwelt on the other side of the flood (*i.e.*, the Euphrates) in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods"[1] (*Note* 1). The migration, then, from Chaldæa was a religious one—the migration of a family which had cast off the gods of its country, adopted the worship of one God, and sought a new home where it might conduct this worship freely. And though the "*call*" of Abraham is mentioned in Genesis[2] as subsequent to, in St. Stephen's statement[3] as prior to, the journey from Chaldæa, the whole voice of sacred history declares Abraham to have been, under Divine inspiration, the leader of that whole movement which thus set up the worship of the true God in the place of idols, and separated his family from the corrupt religion of the world. "Put away," says Joshua,

[1] Josh. xxiv. 2. [2] Gen. xii. 1. [3] Acts vii. 2, 3.

"the gods which your fathers served on the other side the flood;" and "I took your father Abraham from the other side the flood."[1]

Open idolatry then was the religion of the generation in which Abraham was born; he was brought up and educated under it, it was in possession of the ground, and it pressed upon him with all the power of association and authority. But at a certain time of life Abraham comes before us as having rejected this creed and worship, having thrown off the chains of custom, and released himself from the thraldom of early associations: as holding the great doctrine of one God, whom he worships by means of a spiritual conception only, without the aid of figure or symbol. He comes before us as the re-introducer into the world of the great normal idea of worship;—that idea which, descending through the Jewish and Christian dispensations in succession, is the basis of the religion of the whole modern civilised world—the worship of God. All ancient religion, as distinguished from the primitive, laboured under the total inability of even conceiving the idea of the *worship* of *God*. It split and went to pieces upon that rock; acknowledging in a speculative sense one God, but not applying worship to Him. The local, the limited, the finite, was as such an object of worship; the Infinite as such was not: the one was personal, the other impersonal; man stood in relation to the one, he could not place himself in relation to the other. We discover in the Patriarch whom God extricated from the self-imposed dilemma

[1] Josh. xxiv. 14.

of all ancient religion, and who was enabled to cast off the yoke of custom and embrace new truth, the strength of a true rational nature, as well as the devotion of a reformer of religious worship. A Divine revelation does not dispense with a certain character and certain qualities of mind in the person who is the instrument of it. A man who throws off the chains of authority and association must be a man of extraordinary independence of mind, and strength of mind, *although* he does so in obedience to a Divine revelation; because no miracle, no sign or wonder which accompanies a revelation, can by its simple stroke force human nature from the innate hold of custom, and the adhesion to, and fear of, established opinion; can enable it to confront the frowns of men, and take up truth opposed to general prejudice, except there is in the man himself, who is the recipient of the revelation, a certain strength of mind and independence which concurs with the Divine intention. It is the Divine method and law that man should co-operate with God; and that God should act by means of men who are fitting instruments; and this law implies that those who are God's instruments possess real character of their own in correspondence with their mission. The mission to set up or propagate new truth required in Abraham's day, in the natural character of him who had to execute it, something of the nature of what we call a religious reformer in modern times. The recipient of a new revelation must have self-reliance, otherwise he will not believe that he has received it; he will not be sure of it against the force of current opinions,

and men telling him on every side that he is mistaken.

Upon this principle then, that a Divine mission requires the proper man, we discern in Abraham the type which in modern language we call that of the man of thought, upon whom some deep truth has fastened with irresistible power, and whose mind dwells and feeds upon the conviction of it. The truth in the case of Abraham was the conception of one God. And we may observe this great thought was accompanied in his mind, as it has been in all minds which have been profoundly convinced of it, by another, which naturally attaches to it. We may recognise in Abraham's colloquy with God over the impending fate of Sodom, something like the appearance of that great question which has always been connected with the doctrine of the Unity of God—the question of the Divine justice. The doctrine of the Unity of God raises the question of His justice for this reason, that—one God, who is both good and omnipotent, being assumed—we immediately think, Why should He who is omnipotent permit that which He who is in His own nature supremely good, cannot desire, that is evil? The thought, it is true, does not come out in any regular or full form in this mysterious colloquy; and yet it hovers over it; there are hints and forecastings of this great question, which is destined to trouble the human intellect, and to try faith, and to absorb meditation, as long as the world lasts. A shadow passes over, the air stirs slightly, and there is just that fragment

of thought and questioning, which would be in place as the first dawn of a great controversy. "That be far from thee," "that the righteous should be as the wicked:" "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"[1] The Book of Job has been assigned a much later date than the received one, by some, on the ground that the deep vein of thought and sentiment in it, the perception of the difficulty relating to the Divine justice, belongs to a later, more philosophical age of mankind than that primitive one,—to an age of speculation. But it must be considered that this question arises immediately upon the adoption of the belief in one Supreme Being: so that, as soon as ever the belief in the unity of God is obtained, the question of His justice arises with it. We need not, therefore, on this sole account alter the date of the Book of Job, when even in the rudiments of thought which rise up in the colloquy over Sodom, we may see the beginnings of that expression of the deep sentiment of justice which the Book of Job gives with such fulness; and may recognise the germ of that question which still continues to perplex the human mind, and to agitate the atmosphere of human poetry and philosophy.

2. Abraham comes before us as a person who lives in the future, whose mind is cast forward, beyond the immediate foreground of his own day, upon a very remote epoch in the history of the world, and fixed upon a remarkable event in the most distant horizon of time, the nature of which is vague and

[1] Gen. xviii. 25.

dimly known to him, but which is charged with momentous consequences, involving a change in the whole state of the world. The revelation is made to him,—"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed;" he looks onward perpetually to the accomplishment of this prediction. He has the idea in his mind of the world's progress, of a movement in the present order of things towards some great end and consummation. This is a remarkable state of mind. Ordinary men do not live in the future, and have very little idea that things will ever be different from what they are in their own day. The actual state of the world around them is the type of all existence in their eyes, and they cannot conceive another mould or form of things, or even imagine that there ever can be another; they are creatures of present time, nor do they ever entertain distinctly the idea of the future existence of the world at all. It is therefore a fact to arrest us, even if this was all we had—a man in a primitive age of the world, while he is standing upon the very threshold of time, having distinctly before his eyes the future existence of the world, and an improved condition of it. In the mind of Abraham, though the nature of the future is dim, the fact itself of a great future in store for the world is a clear conception; he does not regard things as stationary, as always going to be what they are, but as in a state of progress; he has the vision of a great change before him which is as yet in the extreme distance, but which, when it does come, will be a conspicuous benefit to the human

race, a blessing in which all the families of the earth will share.

This was a conception as foreign to an ordinary mind of Abraham's day, as it would be to such a mind now. Because his future is to us a known past, we might be apt to imagine that the conception would come as a matter of course; and that people of that early age of the world knew by an instinct that it was an early age, and the predecessor of a later one. But there was just as much difficulty in realising a future of the world then, as there is now. The present of that day made the same impression upon the generation of that day, that to-day's present does upon men of to-day; it was as much a boundary of the world's horizon, and stood as much upon the very edge of time, as to-day stands. We observe therefore something very extraordinary, and something entirely opposed to the common habit of the human mind, in the Patriarch Abraham's fixed look into futurity, directed towards an indefinitely distant era of the world. Our Lord Himself has singled out this prophetic look of Abraham as something unexampled in clearness, certainty, and far-reaching extent. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."[1] This was a revelation made to him indeed; but he is equal to the revelation, he embraces it and concurs in his whole power of mind with it.

This is the first thing indeed we observe in connection with the subject of early prophecy. It is the preliminary and general condition of mind in the pro-

[1] John viii. 56.

phetical person which arrests us;—that he *has* the future before him, that he thinks of the world's future, and realises that it *has* a future, and brings home to himself the unrolling powers of time. This fastening of the mind upon the future, to whatever extent and in whatever persons it existed in those very early ages of the world to which the dawn of prophecy belongs, is a most striking and remarkable feature of those ages; and we know that it existed even under paganism.

Upon the shores of the Mediterranean, in the region where the great Roman poet meditated and himself listened to the prophetical strain, stands the traditional cave of the Cumæan Sibyl,—the representative of ancient prophecy, as it existed and held its ground, not under the Judaic dispensation, but parallel with it, and mounting to a common source. It is difficult to speak of the Sibylline verses, corrupted as they were soon after the Christian era, so that the mass of the collection is obviously and glaringly spurious. There is a primitive residuum however, the style of which reveals a native source; and the simple prediction for which Virgil testifies is enough to show the mind of the prophetess, not only with respect to the subject of prophecy, but with respect to that general grasp of the fact of a world's future, and that look that travels forward and ranges over the distant realms of time, which I have just mentioned. There is the Sibyl upon her watch-tower, with her eye carried onward to a distant horizon, which she but dimly descries, but which is marked to her prophetic eye with great events. But what an extraordinary

state of mind is this to belong to any human being in the earliest and most primeval era of paganism! That any man or woman should take the trouble then to think of what would happen to the world a thousand years off! Were there not plenty of important things to attend to then, without going into the future? Was there not the routine of nature and the custom of society? And did not every year and every day bring its present life and its pressing business, its immediate interests, then as now? The sun rose and set, the seasons alternated; men ploughed in the spring and gathered in the autumn, and social life ran its round, and kings and states carried on their affairs, and wars and festivals, famine and plenty, grief and joy, made up the chequered life of man, the vicissitudes of which seemed quite enough to occupy him. Why should one person go beyond this present scene, leap over generations, and think of the world as it would be after ages had passed away? What an isolated eccentric journey for thought! What a dream to take up and absorb the mind! How strange an image it presents to us—yet this is the aspect in which the Sibyl comes before us. In the crowded and familiar scene of a then living and bustling paganism, she is the devotee to the world's hereafter; consecrated to that idea and prospect, she gazes upon the last shore of time; and her sacred brow is lifted up above the throng of common objects and concerns, that her eye may rest upon a mysterious distance and an unknown page of the future history of mankind! It is strange, amid the scattered fragments which constituted human

society then, to see even the recognition by one person's mind of a common humanity—a humanity that had a career to run and an end to fulfil; to see the great problem and riddle of man's existence acknowledged, and a solution expected, as the curtain which hung over the Divine scheme folded up and disclosed the final upshot of it. Amid the idolatry and corruptions of paganism, the reverence that was felt for the Sibyl is a curious and beautiful remnant of the early piety of the world, for which we are hardly prepared, and which comes across us with a surprise which perplexes us. Is this really paganism that is speaking? It cannot be. It is early prophecy which is still holding its ground on human nature, and in popular thought, as a sentiment; obtaining from paganism a sacred rank for the Sibyl—a rank that has been continued by the Church. The Church has incorporated the holy prophetess of paganism in the root of the Christian body, and given her a place in the prophetical order by the side of the patriarchs and prophets of old. She joins in the holy procession, which begins with Adam, Seth, and Enoch, and ends with the last Christian saint, martyr, and confessor: she is acknowledged in the Church's hymns; and the countenance which the painter has given her, symbolical of her solemn gift, appears in the Christian gallery, window, and pictured roof.

But the prophetic element in human nature has its development also on the physical side. The modern world's conception of its own future only pictures indeed the continuation of a present movement, and

does not cross the border of mystery; yet it is an instance of the prophetic vein in human nature. To turn to Bacon's vision of the coming day:—the *Novum Organum* awakens us like a knock at the door; it is the first bell that rings and gathers the whole peal, it is from first to last an announcement. It is coming, the great manifestation of nature; it is not come yet, but it will be here soon; it has been long coming, and we have waited for it, now it is all but come. "All the systems of philosophy hitherto have been only so many plays, only creations of fictitious and imaginary worlds;" there have been "long periods of ages," and only some few observations. Intellect has not forwarded but impeded discovery, and "everything has been abandoned to the mists of tradition, the whirl and confusion of argument, or the waves and mazes of chance." One man has invoked his own spirit, another has called in logic; "the true path has not only been deserted but intercepted and blocked up, and experience has not only been neglected but rejected with disgust." . . . "We cannot, therefore' wonder that no magnificent discoveries worthy of mankind have been brought to light, while men are satisfied and delighted with such scanty and puerile tasks."[1]

All is vague and arbitrary, all is groping in the dark; the human mind is always pressing forward in one direction, but it is unfit for transition. But there is going to be something, and it is this awakening and unfolding of a fresh morning which is the herald's

[1] *Novum Organum*, Book I.

call in the *Novum Organum.* There is the sensation of being just on the borders of a great disclosure, while as yet all at this moment sleeps; of a new reign, of a world just going to break forth into life. This constitutes the characteristic note, the prophetic current, of the *Novum Organum;* we are shut out just at present, nothing is seen; but it is all announcement, all expectation, all the stir of something coming, all the sound of trumpets, all the preparation for an era, all the breaking of a day. Bacon is seen in his principal aspect as a prophet, he lives just on the edge of an age of marvels, close upon it, still not in it, but foreseeing it; he lives in a future; the precursor is gone forward out of his own age. He lives not amidst particulars, but only in a vision of general discovery. All will have the suddenness, the brightness, the inexplicableness of magic, though he foretells it and knows it is coming. Bacon insists upon the chance incident to discovery, how completely it will baulk all people who think they have the road to it, who go upon premisses, and see their way to conclusions. "Had any one meditated on balistic machines and battering-rams as they were used by the ancients, whatever application he might have exerted, and though he might have consumed a whole life in the pursuit, yet would he never have hit upon the invention of flaming engines acting by means of gunpowder; nor would any person who had made woollen manufactures and cotton the subject of his observation and reflection have ever discovered thereby the nature of the silkworm or of silk."[1] . . . "If

[1] *Novum Organum,* Book II.

before the discovery of the compass any one had said that an instrument had been invented by which the quarters and points in the heavens could be exactly taken and distinguished; men would have entered into disquisitions on the refinement of astronomical instruments, . . . but that a mere mineral or metallic substance should yet in its motion agree with that of such bodies would have appeared absolutely incredible."[1]

Thus do the great discoveries flash forth like magic in Bacon's future, not as they were concerned with causes at all—wild conceptions, offsprings of chance, born amid the incongruous and heterogeneous. A man cannot set about making them; each "comes not by any gradual improvement and extension of the arts, but merely by chance."[2] How then does Bacon *prophesy* "a vast mass of inventions," an age of discoveries, an "instauration," a fulfilment of hopes, the new light of axioms, the advancement of the sciences, the interpretation of Nature, and the reign of man? How does he *prophesy* a harvest of discoveries and a manifestation of Nature? Because he saw that though each discovery by itself may be a chance, when a great many men are attending to one subject, and people are set upon nature as an object of attention, the chances of discovery in connection with this subject must increase, and there must be a multiplication of this possibility. He saw that the investigation of Nature was rising in men's minds; that men were experimenting, and were beginning to attend to facts

[1] *Novum Organum*, Book I. [2] Book II.

and real physical objects. Hence there arose that conclusion which constituted his prophecy. His mind was in acute sympathy with the growing mind of the world, his pulse moved with the growing beat of human thought and curiosity, though then but faint: he saw the immense difference in the mode of studying natural science which was inaugurated by this rising taste for facts, this putting aside of the idols of the human mind for the ideas of the Divine mind; that is to say, "certain idle fictions of the imagination for the real stamp and impression of created objects, as they are found in nature."[1] He saw a mere "handful of phenomena collected into a natural history." But foreseeing this, he foresaw a world of discovery; for "if we had but any *one* who could *actually answer* our interrogations of nature, the invention of all causes and sciences would be the labour of but a few years."[2] And even an approximation to this would be a beginning. The quickness with which Bacon caught up a hint thus made itself a prophecy. He felt himself just on the borders of a new world, in the midst of a stir of mind which came before an age of marvels, and in the *Novum Organum* he lives in this new world, in the era of the great manifestation. He lives a prophetic life, scattering oracles and pregnant sayings, and welcoming the light of the approaching day.

But to go back. There is a wonderful life and spirit, spring and joyousness, in early prophecy which immediately strikes us; as well as a large-

[1] *Novum Organum*, Book I. [2] *Ibid.*

ness of scope and a ubiquity in the tongue of prophecy itself. In a sense the whole earth prophesies; the fount of prophecy comes up to the surface, there, here, and everywhere, where one least expects; it does not go in one fixed channel and course, but rises up in different openings and clefts which it makes for itself all the world over. It has a free and lively action, and wide play. One common character pervades the various announcements of early prophecy, whether they meet us in the formal and regular channel of the family of Abraham, or over the wide regions of paganism, in east or west; and that is the disclosure of a great state of happiness and a blessing to come upon this present earth, under a personal restorer and regenerator of God's own choosing. Of the Patriarchal prophecy and of the Sibylline prophecy it is alike characteristic, that the blessing or the state of restoration which is predicted belongs to this earth, and that this earth is the appointed scene of it. The fundamental Jewish prophecy which runs through Scripture and comes down from Abraham to Isaiah has respect to this earth as the locality of it. The language is, "all nations," "the earth," "the land," "the isles," "the mountains." The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord; "they shall inherit the land for ever;" "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." The prophetic scene of a regenerated, a purified, and a happy earth, is also the vision of the Sibyl:—

Καὶ τότε δ' ἐξεγερεῖ βασιμήϊον εἰς αἰῶνας
Πάντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους, ἅγιον νόμον ὁππότ ἔδωκεν

Εὐσεβέσι, τοῖς πᾶσιν ὑπέσχετο γαῖαν ἀνοίξειν,
Καὶ κόσμον, μακάρων τε πύλας, καὶ χάρματα πάντα,
Καὶ νοῦν ἀθάνατον, αἰώνιον εὐφροσύνην ετ.
Πάσης δ' ἐκ γαίης λίβανον καί δῶρα πρὸς οἴκους
Οἴσουσι μεγάλοιο Θεοῦ.[1]

The form and mould of the prediction—the beatification of this earth, as distinct from an invisible world of happiness—singularly fits in with the simplicity and primitive mind of early prophecy: with that first uprising of the prophetical spirit in the heart of man, in the infancy and newness of God's gift to man, when he could not yet distinguish the visible world from the invisible. The look forward to a happy earth, where all would be innocence and peace, to another paradise and golden age, was the bright anticipation of childhood, when prophecy, itself true and sent by God, was yet accommodated to the vivid sympathies of the world's infancy with what was tangible or visible. It was to that age a picture of bliss, which no purely spiritual world *could* be, and which imparted a sense of delight and vivid hope.

But though a great and fundamental prophecy mounts up to one common source, and belongs alike to Jewish and Pagan dispensations, the difference is enormous in the way in which prophecy is treated, and in the account to which it is turned, in the *regular* channel, and in the *irregular*. Upon the wild and uncultivated pagan ground prophecy received no systematic attention, and had no regular

[1] *Sibyll.* iii. 766.

home, no fitting receptacle in which to lodge. The tradition of the Sibyl points indeed to the existence of prophetic minds in the pagan world, which had in dim vision before them some great future change in the order of things here; but nothing came of this prophetic gleam; it founded nothing, it erected no institutions, no framework, no body, no Church; it passed away and wandered into space, and only returned in desultory and dreamy sounds which interested but did not rouse the mind. Prophecy was a sweet but broken strain, whose notes floated upon the air, only to be scattered immediately by some rough wind; and a transient and fitful music only entranced the ear, to die away in feeble cadences and fragments. Prophecy was like one of those thoughts which just come into the mind and vanish; and we cannot catch it again, though we seem to be just upon the track of it, and the shadow hovers about us. Or it was like some early memory or association, which has visited us for a moment, and has gone away instantly and cannot be recalled. The man who saw his natural face in a glass, and went away and forgot what manner of man he was, was haunted indeed by the vague image of somebody who had been reflected in the mirror; but had not got that clear likeness of himself which could make him know himself; could warn, caution, instruct, and guard. Prophecy thus under paganism never grew into a practical and directing power; and even the great Roman poet, captivated as he was by its ancient utterance, and the beauty of its promise, yet could do

no more with it than convert it into a court compliment, and connect its romantic associations with the prospects of the new-born heir of the Pollios. But as soon as prophecy found a receptacle in the chosen race, it grew strong, it became an architect and builder, it raised institutions, it enacted ordinances. In Abraham it founded a family, in Moses it framed a law, in David it erected a kingdom. The Jewish people from the first gave prophecy a fixed home, and the nation became the regular and guarded depository for the sacred gift. The Jewish Church was the fort of prophecy, maintaining and keeping up the inspired expectation, protecting it from outside blasts, and surrounding it with institutions and schools; so that, preserved as a directing influence among them, it prepared a practical reception for the Messiah; and founded that body of thought in the nation which welcomed Him who fulfilled the promise when He came, and in that welcome founded the Christian Church. Prophecy had thus the most striking practical result, and proved itself an instrument of real efficiency and power.

In Abraham himself we see the foundation of that strong external structure,—that law, that system, and that discipline,—which was to act as the depository of the prophetic promise; we see it in the fact that he founded a family, and at the same time bound that family by rules, precepts, and regulations which enabled it to preserve and hand down the true faith. It is worth observing that Scripture does not only assign to Abraham the office of a Patriarch or pro-

genitor of a family, but attributes to him remarkable qualifications for establishing a religion and securing its continuance in that family. It gives him a character somewhat akin to that of an ancient lawgiver, representing him as laying down rules and imparting a particular mould and type to his family, providing for its future instruction and worship, and treating it not merely *as* a family but as an *institution;* just as the old legislator laid down a plan, a method, and a code for the new State. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation?" "For I know him *that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord* to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him."[1] We ought not, certainly, to strain or exaggerate the sense of any passage in Scripture; and yet, when we consider how much is often contained in a short compass in Scripture, and in how simple a way Scripture expresses very important events and transactions, it hardly appears too bold to say that this text is a description of more than the head of a family—that it represents the founder of a religious community, whose future adherence to the true faith he was anxious to secure by proper regulations.

And here we have the peculiar and special characteristic which distinguishes Abraham as a believer, from other believers in the true God who appear to have existed then in the world. Abraham was not,

[1] Gen. xviii. 17, 18, 19.

it would appear, so absolutely solitary in his creed in the world at that time, as that there were literally none beside himself and his family who held the same belief in one supreme God. One such believer we are told of, and him a person of exalted station, one of the kings of the very country in which Abraham sojourned —Melchizedek, king of Salem and "priest of the most high God," who received tithes from Abraham, and who blessed Abraham and said, "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth."[1] In this priestly office and this blessing is contained undoubtedly a creed, and the true creed, and Melchizedek is throughout adopted by Scripture as a true believer. And if he was, his very office would indicate that there were others beside himself who believed in the same supreme God, implying as it does an altar, sacrifice, and public worship. And if here, then elsewhere, believers in the true God may have existed in the world, and perhaps each of them may have had his own group around him. Such, perhaps, in a later age, was the situation of Jethro; and even, great as was his fall from this eminence, such may have been the position of the prophet Balaam. And in an earlier age this scattering of true belief amid the religious corruption of the world was the more probable, from the very circumstance that that corruption had not then had such time to grow and consolidate itself.

There were, therefore, probably contemporary with Abraham, holy men in different parts, who held the same belief, and were more or less divided from the

[1] Gen. xiv. 18, 19.

surrounding mass. But these men, if there were such, would not appear to have possessed the characteristics which marked the great Patriarch, and fitted him to be so singular and special an instrument in the hands of God for establishing the true faith in the world. Excepting from remark the mysterious personage whose sudden appearance upon the stage of sacred history has created such perplexity and awe, and whose typical aspect so predominates over his historical;— excepting him, and speaking of these holders of the true belief as a class, one would suppose that they were good and holy men doubtless, but that they were content to believe what was true themselves, without much concern for the world at large, or for the future, and without providing for the security and establishment of the truth. They were men probably who had no thought beyond their own day, who lived in amity with surrounding idolatry though differing from it, made no great protest, and stood upon an ordinary neighbourly footing with the world. Such quiet good men are respected, but they do not root the truth in the world; what they believe is apt to die away with them, and indeed they expect it do so; they have no great confidence in the power of truth, they assume that error is the normal condition of mankind, and think it vain to struggle with it, they leave men alone, and are satisfied with saving their own souls. Such men have their own place and use, and do their own work in their day, but they are not made to be instruments in the hands of God for instituting a new dispensation and founding a church. Abraham was

cast in a different mould. He has the future of the world before his mind; he looks upon "all the nations of the earth" in connection with the true faith; which he contemplates as going to take deep root, to spread, and to gain the allegiance of mankind; for the blessing which they are to receive through him must involve *their reception of his belief and hope.*

Such is the man whom the Bible puts before us in Abraham. The Patriarch appears in the page of Scripture as—although invested with the warlike pomp and state of a chieftain of that age—a solitary; a solitary in his creed; a solitary in the extreme and dim remoteness of the scene and object upon which his mind rests. As a believer he has cast off the popular religion and is a witness against it; as a prince he is a wanderer without alliances in a strange land; and his only compensation is that he is enabled to live in thought out of the present scene and circumstances, and to repose upon futurity. We are brought here for the first time in contact with the majesty, the strength, and the splendour of prophecy in the religion of the chosen race. There is nothing in the history of the character, the sentiment, the aspirations of nations, which is equal to, which can for a moment be compared with, this mighty impulse and current of faith in the Jewish community. Other nations had their prophetic traditions, their own oracular voices borne along the air, which pointed the way to conquest and empire; but the objects to which these national vaticinations looked were petty and local, or at any rate the vulgar prizes of territorial ambitions:

Jewish prophecy had a totally different goal. What have we in any heathen nation's early forecast of victory and success at all equal in force, in boldness, in grandeur of scope, to that look into futurity given to one, who, standing upon the earth, in the very morning of time, before history had begun, and when as yet no people of Israel, no family of Israel, no seed of Israel, were in existence, aged and childless, grasped the whole world as his inheritance, and saw all the earth engrafted upon his own stock by conversion to his own faith? What Roman anticipation can compare not only in sublimity but even in extent and largeness with this? Yet there is the prophecy before us, supported by the whole history and tradition of a nation. Nor could it be otherwise than gratuitous for even a sceptic, however he may reject the inspiration, to deny that this prophecy existed, that it was of the nature here described, and that it dates from this primitive era. Abraham in that early dawn of history, with polytheism and idolatry all around him, saw his own creed triumphant in the world; he predicted its triumph, and the prediction has as a matter of fact come true. It is triumphant. The creed of Abraham has become the creed of the civilised world. The Patriarch's creed has been victorious over the idolatry of the human race, and grown from a deposit in the breast of one man into a universal religion. It is this force which is characteristic of Jewish prophecy; there may be true prophecy elsewhere in the world, but it is weak, it is broken, and its utterance dies away upon

the ear, and is scattered to the winds; in the Jewish channel it is strong, compact, and consistent; it has a fixed and confident hold upon the future, a grasp of forecast, and a practical evergazing assurance; it provided from the first for its own transmission, created laws and institutions, and made a prophetical nation.

The question may be asked, Why did not Abraham *preach* the true faith, and convert the nations around him? but the truth is that the time had not come for that form of apostleship. The missionary belongs essentially to a body of believers, out of which he is sent, and upon which he rests as his support and stay in the background, throughout his labours, however far they carry him from home; as a general rests upon his base of operations in war. But the body of the faithful, or the Church, had not been formed in the Patriarchal age, and the formation of it took many ages. Abraham belonged to no Church outside of himself; he was himself the Church, which at that stage of the Divine dispensation resided in an individual and a solitary. In the order of Providence the Patriarch precedes the Apostle. The mode of proselytising proper to a beginning of things is the foundation of a nation: the nation once made is a church, and acts upon the world by becoming the background of individual exertions. The Apostle was backed by "the true Israel," but the Patriarch himself did not belong to a body, but was himself the germ of that body. The early and Patriarchal thus singularly contrasts with the later and Evangelical form of apostleship. The evangelical Apostle, or disseminator of the true

faith in the world, is a missionary and preacher: the Patriarch had that office also to fulfil to the faith, but he fulfilled it by founding a family and a law: and that which the later Apostle proclaimed by word of mouth to all the world, he handed down to a line of posterity. In being the progenitor of a nation, he was also the transmitter of a creed. The descent of blood is the descent of faith too: father teaching son, and each succeeding generation imbibing the truth from its predecessor. The Patriarch then, as the forefather of a great nation, was also the apostle of that nation. His greatness was not that of an ancestor only, glorying in his posterity, but also that of a teacher impressing his own type upon a school.

With the strong foresight of a great future for the world, we note in the Patriarch the foresight too of *his own* posthumous greatness. A chieftain only of an average station, and barely admitted to a level with the petty monarchs around him, he has only to throw his eye forward into time, and he sees himself in his true rank and position. He sees a representation and impersonation of himself in a mighty nation of which he is the founder; he is prospectively the head of this nation; it looks back to him through all ages as the man to whom it first owes its existence, the original architect of the fabric, the root of the magnificent tree which spreads its branches so wide. He lives in this nation, he reigns in its continuance and growth, and its greatness is his greatness. He may not raise his head high at present then, and the kings of the country may hold themselves above him;

but he knows that his day will come, and that he leaves behind him a seed of power which will fill the earth, and cast all contemporary rule into the shade. "A father of many nations have I made thee,—and kings shall come out of thee." Nor will this nation be a single power only; it will be the nucleus in some sense of an universal power, and "all the families of the earth" will gather around it. He sees predestined for him, and inscribed on the roll of Providence, a name which will literally be everlasting and universal. Before the great Patriarch in his solitary wanderings,—a sojourner and a pilgrim, moving his tents from place to place in a strange land,—a boundless prospect arose, which we cannot reduce to any geographical measurement. It is true, the known world of that day was a small one compared with ours; the populated earth of the Patriarch had a circumference of cloud and darkness, and was bounded by a *terra incognita* where no traveller's foot had ever trod; but the magnitude of an idea in the mind of man must not be measured by the material extent and number of that which raises it. How petty in actual geographical size were the States of ancient Greece; yet the wars of those States excited in the Greek all the sense of grandeur and of triumph which the most gigantic European contest has done in modern nations; and the breast of an Athenian or Spartan statesman or soldier swelled with as strong an emotion when a victory was gained in a battle where neither of the armies equalled a modern regiment, as a modern feels when one half of Europe

conquers the other in the field. So little can we tie the force and largeness of ideas in the human mind, to the actual proportions of the material facts which serve as the occasion of them. This mountain which towers to heaven before our eyes does not produce the sense of height and grandeur which impresses us, in exact proportion to the number of perpendicular feet; the imagination of the spectator *gives* it height, as sure as there is enough material altitude to stimulate it; and no member of the Alpine range or the chain of the Andes could look higher than it does.

There never was a day since there were nations upon the earth, when "all the nations of the earth" did not present an overwhelming image to the human mind. That "all" was a vast inconceivable "all;" it was that which no man could describe or calculate; it was countless number, limitless space. The *whole* — the *world* was an infinity; no thought could embrace the fact or do more than put a symbol or counter for it. "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be."[1] The Patriarch saw that his work would live—the work he had done in the world. So, to take another kind of work of a life, has a great poet prophesied the immortality of his work.

But though a great posthumous name is certainly appealed to in the Divine communications to the Patriarch, and though it is certainly intended that that grand prospect should nerve him to his work—"I will make

[1] Gen. xv. 5.

thy name great"—this is still a motive which suits an earlier dispensation better than a later one. The future *actual* existence of *himself*, where it is definitely and distinctly grasped, must throw into the shade the existence of his *name*. His name is not himself; his name is only a reflection thrown off from himself. Himself, and what happens to himself, must be the important consideration *to* himself. His real immortality lies in the perpetuity of himself, not in that of his name, which cannot do him the slightest good *where* he does not exist, *if* he will not then exist. The question what is to become of the shadow of himself left in this world must pale in interest, in proportion as his own real future existence is embraced. The motive of a posthumous reputation, then, is not a Gospel motive, because the Gospel is the tidings of real immortality, and that is its special appeal to man; whereas the desire for posthumous fame has nothing to do with a real immortality. A man who has no notion but that his existence totally ends at death, can still derive pleasure from the anticipation of his fame after death; and can enjoy *now* the foresight of a fact, which fact itself he will not exist *then* to enjoy, because that future fact is a proof of present success. It is indeed simply blind confusion, an hallucination of the reason, to mix up these two absolutely distinct desires; to identify the immortality of a name with the immortality of a person; yet a debasing stupor and disorder of the intellect does prevail in this respect. Men, under the notion of a name, throw

forward a false earthly existence beyond the grave, which satisfies them; they imagine themselves *now* enjoying this posthumous name *then* when it *is* posthumous; or, in other words, conceive themselves as dead and alive at the same time. Cannot reason break this iron yoke of illusion? She can if she is asked to do so, but they do not ask her, and would rather their sleep was not broken or their mist dispelled.

But though the desire for posthumous fame is not a motive of Gospel source, it is one of those motives of nature which the Gospel does not forbid in its proper place. The Gospel is not at war with a natural instinct of the heart: it only condemns a gross misconception about posthumous greatness—the confounding it with a real future life—the selfish and unnatural dream of men who grasp at it as if they were really going to enjoy it, and to enjoy it *when* it is posthumous.[1] But let this blind confusion about it be cleared, and let the thing stand for what it is and nothing more; and Christianity does not forbid a satisfaction being derived from the anticipation of it. The accomplisher of a great work has a legitimate pleasure in that work, in himself being the doer of it, and in the knowledge of that circumstance by others. And why should not

1 "Sed nescio quomodo, animus erigens se, posteritatem semper ita prospiciebat, quasi, cum excessisset e vita, tum denique victurus esset." —Cicero, *De Senectute*, xxiii. 82.

"Sed cum illi essent in civitate terrena, quibus propositus erat omnium pro illa officiorum finis, incolumitas ejus, et regnum non in cælo sed in terra; non in vita æterna, sed in decessione morientium et successione moriturorum: quid aliud amarent quam gloriam, qua volebant etiam post mortem tanquam vivere in ore laudantium?"—Aug. *De Civit. Dei*, lib. v. 14.

posterity be among those others? But a religious man, if he foresees this posthumous name, sees also a chasm which separates this name from himself, and withdraws it from him as a selfish prize. A shadow rests upon it which precludes vulgar pride and self-congratulation. The Patriarch saw himself emerge out of a whole contemporary world after death; but such an ascent, which stands in *contrast* with present depression, is, although an elevating and inspiriting reflection, a mortifying and chastening one as well; the good is not grasped, is not fastened on, is not enjoyed tangibly; it is a vision, a prophecy, an immaterial form of greatness, the shadow of a substance which has never been possessed, the symbol of a deprivation, and a memento of mortality.

LECTURE II.

THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

WHEN objections are raised against various actions and courses of action represented as done and carried on by Divine command in the Old Testament, which involved a summary mode of dealing with human life, the answer is made, that God is the Lord of life, the right to which ceases as soon as evidence exists of a Divine command to deprive men of it. "If it were commanded," says Butler, "to cultivate the principles, and act from the spirit of treachery, ingratitude, cruelty; the command would not alter the nature of the case, or the action, in any of these instances. But it is quite otherwise in precepts which require only the doing an external action; for instance, taking away the property or life of another. For men have no right to either life or property but what arises solely from the grant of God. When this grant is revoked, they cease to have any right at all in either: and when this revocation is made known, as surely it is possible it may be, it must cease to be unjust to deprive them of either."[1]

This defence then is undoubtedly, as a general and abstract statement, true and complete; nor is there

[1] *Analogy*, part ii. chap. iii.

anything wanting to it, or that need be added to it, as an abstract position. It is unquestionable that if a command of God to kill even an innocent person is made known to us, we have not only the right, but are under the strictest moral obligation to kill that person. But though a true and perfect defence in the abstract, it leaves out one important point which ought to be supplied before the general defensive statement is applied to a particular case—the point, viz., how the Divine command to perform such an action is made known to the person to whom it is asserted in Scripture to be made known. That is a question which it is essential to answer before the individual can be pronounced to have been justified in performing the act. Undoubtedly the right of man to live ceases as soon as ever evidence arises of a Divine command to deprive him of it; but when does such evidence arise?

The answer then which is given to this question is that the evidence arose by means of a miraculous manifestation through which the Will of God was declared, that these actions should be done. And this is a true and correct answer. But it still has to be accounted for, how a miracle at that day *was* the evidence which it was of such a Divine command. Supposing at the present day, and under the present dispensation, a miracle were wrought in evidence of an alleged command of God to any man to kill an innocent son, would such a miracle be regarded as sufficient evidence of such a command? It cannot with any truth be asserted that it would. The Christian Church would

obviously condemn the act, and would refuse to pronounce a miracle to be sufficient justification of it.

The question of the rightness or wrongness of this class of actions belongs indeed to the great religious question of the warranting power of miracles, and the conditions of miraculous evidence.

When we go then to the Scripture doctrine of miracles and of the evidence rising from miracles, we find, in the first place, that the general rule laid down is, that miracles are evidence of the Divine will; and that a command which has the warrant of a miracle is to be regarded as coming from God. This is the law relating to this subject which Scripture both expresses in words, and assumes and supposes in its historical account of the courses of events, and of Divine Providence. But when we enter further into the teaching of Scripture on this subject, we discover that, together with this general rule respecting miracles, there is a collateral principle inculcated; viz., that a miracle may be permitted by God for the purpose of trial. Where, then, the authority of a miracle contradicts any clear knowledge we have of the Divine will, any instructions from antecedent sources, this is the interpretation of it which Scripture enjoins upon us. We are warned that the miracle does not in such cases bear its primary and more natural interpretation as an evidence of the Divine will, but the secondary interpretation of it as a trial of moral strength in resisting that apparent evidence,—of the moment and from without,—in favour of a more real evidence of His will which we have from antecedent sources or from within.

Thus it is laid down in the Old Testament that a miracle cannot authorise an act of idolatry; and in the New Testament that a miracle cannot authorise the acceptance of any doctrine manifestly opposed to the Gospel revelation. In such cases we are plainly told that the purpose of the miracle is not evidence but trial; that it is intended to test our faith; to prove us, whether we give way to the more tangible and external kind of appeal against a deep inward persuasion of a moral and religious kind, or whether we adhere loyally to the inner law in spite of the outer pretension of authority. A miracle is thus not represented in Scripture as absolutely and of itself evidence of a Divine command: rather it is expressly represented as not being. We find that it lies under conditions; that it is limited by our own knowledge gained from other and prior sources of the Divine will; that it is checked by the internal evidence of moral and religious truths,—whether principles of belief, or rules of conduct,—which, either express revelation, or God's natural enlightening Providence has imparted to us. The Scriptural check, *e.g.*, would be the same against a miracle on the side of *idolatry*, whether we supposed the unity of God to have been arrived at by natural reason or by special revelation. The rule of Scripture in substance is that no great moral or religious principle or law of conduct of which we are practically, upon general antecedent grounds, certain, can be upset even by a real miracle; but that when the two come into collision as evidence, the miracle must give way and the moral conviction stand; that no miracle, in short, can outweigh a plain duty; and that

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a *real* miracle might be wrought, and yet it would be wrong to do the act which the miracle enjoined.

If, then, a certain class of Divine commands which were proved by miracles in one age of mankind could not be proved by the same evidence now, this must arise in consequence of some difference in the conceptions of mankind in former ages and in our own, in consequence of which such commands were suitable to an earlier period of the world and not to a later, and were adapted for proof by miracles then, and are not adapted for that mode of proof now. If, *e.g.*, a miracle was in a former age sufficient evidence of a Divine command to destroy life, and now it is not, it must be that we are now possessed with a principle in such strong disagreement with homicide, that the alternative of the miracle being only permitted as a *trial* necessarily becomes more reasonable now than that of its being proof of a *command;* whereas this principle did not exist in equal force and strength in the mind of a former age, and therefore the miracle was taken in its more obvious meaning as proof of a Divine commandment. It must be, in short, that the command was accommodated to the age in which it was given, and was therefore adapted to be proved by a miracle ; whereas now such a command would be in opposition to a higher law and general enlightenment, that would resist the authority of the miracle : which mode of proof would consequently be unfitted for it.

To kill another, even an innocent man, is so far indeed from being itself contrary to morality, that nothing can be more certain than if it were known

that God ordered us to take away the life of an innocent man, it would be strictly obligatory upon us to do so. But though this is undoubtedly true in speculation and as a supposition, yet in practice the rights of human life are so strongly felt now, they are so intimate a part of the moral progress of mankind, and the responsibility of violating them is so tremendous, that no miracle could practically act as sufficient evidence to warrant the infraction of them, and the destruction of the life of an innocent person. Because a miracle is, by the express law of Scripture, always subject to the possibility that it may be sent for our trial in resisting, instead of our faith in obeying it. But if there is any case in the world in which this condition would operate, it is in the case of a supposed miraculous command to take away the life of an innocent man. Although therefore in theory the Divine command to kill him, supposed to be known, would be strictly obligatory, nor would the innocence of the man be any contradiction to it, yet in practice the difficulty is so great of its becoming known, that such a command would be virtually nugatory; a miracle could be the only evidence of it, and that, by the law of Scripture, has been disabled to act as evidence. The act of killing another, as being simply an external act, is not, indeed, in any contradiction whatever to a right state of the affections, but the act itself does not the less require justification; a Divine command alone can be that justification; and no evidence under the circumstances can be given of a Divine command.

What was the difference then in the conceptions of mankind in a former age, compared with the present, which renders a miracle evidence of Divine command to kill then, whereas it could not be such evidence now?

When we examine the ancient mind all the world over, one very remarkable want is apparent in it, viz. a true idea of the individuality of man; an adequate conception of him as an independent person,—a substantial being in himself, whose life and existence was his own. Man always figures as an appendage to somebody—the subject to the monarch, the son to the father, the wife to the husband, the slave to the master. He is the function or circumstance of somebody else. The slave was a piece of property—κτῆμα ἔμψυχον, and the old Hindu law divided "cattle into bipeds and quadrupeds." The laws of Manu insert the *persons* of the wife and the son *in the person* of the head of the family, as if they were absorbed and incorporated in it, just as the several *members* are absorbed and embraced in the unity of the *body*. "A man is perfect when *he* consists of himself, his wife, and his son."[1] Their property belongs to the man, because "*they* belong to him,"[2] upon which ground he could sell or give away his son for a slave. Stories from the Brahmanas show that an Aryan father had power of life and death over a son.[3] Oriental civil law formally recognised the judicial principle of extending the parent's guilt and punishment to the children, which it could have done only

[1] Sir W. Jones, vol. viii. p. 8. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 398.

[3] Max Müller's *History of Sanscrit Literature*, p. 408.

under a defective idea of the child's individuality, treating the child as a mere appendage of the father. In a public execution the criminal's whole family was punished by the same judicial sword which inflicted death upon himself: nor was this done upon the ground of any special command from an avenging deity, which indeed was not needed for it, but only as an exercise of the simple right of civil justice—a right not indeed always acted upon, but still rooted in law, and ready for use whenever the civil authority thought fit to fall back upon it.

We see, indeed, both in the political institutions and superstitions of antiquity, regulations and practices which obviously imply, as the necessary condition of their existence, a totally different idea of human individuality, and of human rights, from that with which modern society and Christian society is animated. We find that this State and that that State had what appear to us most extraordinary, most eccentric and anomalous laws, in the sphere of human rights; radically, as it seems to us, clashing with those rights. We are at first disposed to lay the blame entirely upon the particular states and lawgivers. But when we see one state after another involved in the charge, it gradually becomes clear to us, that though particular states may have got out of an acknowledged principle stronger and rougher consequences and worked it to a harsher issue than others did, there must have been some *universal* defective conception of human rights in those ages, to have made these particular laws and customs of certain states pos-

sible. A lawgiver cannot act against the universal opinion of mankind in his day; if he institutes any particular infringement of human rights, there must be a premiss for that infringement in a universal defective conception of mankind at that day. Thus the law of Lycurgus for the destruction of weakly infants in Sparta at the very birth, would have been impossible had there not been *all over the world* then a very different conception of the right of the human being with respect to his own life than what exists now. With us the rights of man commence with his very birth; and an infant an hour old has an independent right and property in his own life, which the whole world cannot take away from him. Had that been the received idea in the age of Lycurgus, he could not have founded this Spartan rule; but it was not. Mankind had not embraced as yet the true notion of human individuality; man was an appendage to some man or some body. That the infant was treated as the pure property of the state in Sparta, was a result which rose upon an *universal* defective assumption regarding man in *that stage* of human progress; it was a harsh and cruel use of that assumption, but it could not have arisen without that assumption as its condition.

This great defect of conception was indeed deeply fixed in the Roman law. As a code for the regulation of property, the Roman law commands our admiration; its assumptions, its distinctions, its fictions, are of the highest legal merit; its whole structure was based upon nature and common sense,

and it carried into the most intricate details and applications an instinctive standard of equity, of which it never lost sight. The contrast therefore is all the greater when from the regulation of property we turn to its dealings with persons. In the former we have an anticipation of modern civilisation, and we feel ourselves amid modern ideas, and in the atmosphere of our own courts. In the latter we are consigned to barbarism again. The criminal law of Rome took low ground in its estimate of a large class of crimes, which it treated as civil wrongs only; but its great blot was the domestic code. The son was the property of the father, without rights, without substantial being, in the eye of Roman law. The father had the power of life and death over him; was the proprietor of all the wealth he acquired. The wife, again, was the property of her husband, an ownership of which the moral result was most disastrous. The Roman ladies, as the arts and refinements of life advanced, disdained the harsh yoke of true matrimony, —not only did the sacramental ceremony of the *confarreatio* fall almost entirely into disuse, but even the stricter civil marriage, the *conventio*, was neglected; and in its place was substituted a contract which left either party the liberty to dissolve the connection at will, out of which arose the matrimonial picture of Juvenal—

Fiunt octo mariti
Quinque per autumnos.[1]

The same defective idea of human individuality and the rights of life is shown in a very different

[1] Satire vi. 228.

fact, which has a horrible prominence in the history of ancient religions, viz. the prevalence of human sacrifice. It is impossible to suppose that any superstition, however strong, could have so trampled upon the natural right of life, as the custom of human sacrifice did, had there been at the time that idea of the natural right of life existing in the human mind; that is to say, if that idea had existed in any definite shape. The very selfishness of man, and the very instinct of self-preservation, would in that case have made him stand up for his own life, against the claims of a monstrous and cruel power. If we suppose such a strict and accurate sense of the right of the individual to his own life as we have now, no superstition however ferocious could possibly have had force enough to withstand that sense, and sacrifice individuals wholesale. There could not therefore have been then that strict sense of the right and property of the individual in his own life that there is now; and the institution of human sacrifice thus implied as the condition of its own establishment the defective idea of the rights of the individual man.

With these facts before us, we may understand how deeply fixed in the mind of ancient society was the idea of one man belonging to another; how long a time it must have required to uproot that idea, and how in truth nothing but a new religion could do it. Even Rome, with all her later material civilisation, could never completely embrace the notion, which lies at the bottom of all modern law and religion, that every man is *himself*, an individual being with an in-

dependent existence of his own and independent rights. The *jus naturale* of the individual is indeed so self-evident now, that we can hardly conceive society without it; and we are apt to suppose that it must have been equally self-evident to any human being, in any age, who had the simple exercise of his reason. But all history shows that, so far from this idea having been always obvious to the human understanding, it has on the contrary been the slow and gradual growth of ages. Nor perhaps is the consideration valueless, that in the early stages of society, before civil government was formed, and before man had become a trained and disciplined being, as in a degree he is now, some strong idea such as that which is contained in saying—You belong to another, you are the property of another,—may have been necessary to control and keep in bounds the native insolence and wild pride, the obstinacy, the fierceness, the animal caprice, the rage, the spite, the passion of the human creature. When man was rude and government was weak, there was wanted for the control of man some *idea* which could fasten upon him and overcome him, and be in the stead of government and civilisation. Such an idea was this one. The nature that can be coerced by nothing else can be tamed by an idea. Instil from his earliest infancy into man the idea that he *belongs* to another, is the property of another, let everything around proceed upon this idea, let there be nothing to interfere with it or rouse suspicions in his mind to the contrary, and he will yield entirely to that idea. He will take his own deprivation of right, the necessity of his own

subservience to another, as a matter of course. And that idea of himself will keep him in order. He will grow up with the impression that he has not the right of ownership in himself;—in his passions, any more than he has in his work. He will thus be coerced from *within himself,* but not *by* himself; *i.e.*, not by an active faculty of self-command, but by the passive reception of an instilled notion which he has admitted into his own mind, and which has fastened upon him so strongly that he cannot shake it off.

Do we not feel that we are apt to think of ourselves as others think of us? and that not by a rational act of judgment but a mere passive yielding to an impression from without. Let people around us think poorly of us, and we think poorly of ourselves, at least it requires an effort not to do so; the opposition to surrounding influence taxes our self-reliance. Hence it is that, as an ordinary rule, it is not good for a man either to live with or even see much of another who habitually depreciates him; such intercourse tends to lower his spirit. For though a man's self-reliance ought to be tested, it ought to be tested fairly, it ought not to have a constant weight thrown upon it.

To return then to the Old Testament facts,—we may observe that the same defective idea of human individuality, and the right and property of the individual in his own life, which prevailed in early ages generally, is traceable even in the Patriarchal and Jewish mind. It would indeed be expecting too much from a rude nation under slow training for higher truth, that they should not partake of the general

notions of the world at that time regarding the natural rights of man. This latter is in truth, though its *root* is in our *moral* nature, an idea of the civil or political order, and therefore it is not an idea of which a purely religious dispensation, Patriarchal or Jewish, guaranteed the present communication. It is an idea which is part of the civilisation of mankind, and we might as well expect at once civilisation in the early stages of human society, as expect this idea of the true individuality of man in those stages. We do not indeed, in identifying it with civilisation, disconnect it with morals: civilisation has its *moral* side in those ideas which relate to the rights of man,—which belong to the realm of justice, and the development of which is a development and manifestation of justice. Still, though it is the moral side of civilisation to which those ideas belong, they are a part of civilisation: they are political ideas. They come under the political head; they appertain to mankind in their aspect of a community as a subject of social order; they concern man in society, and in relation to his brother man. They are therefore political ideas, and belong to the growth of civilisation. It cannot therefore be any reflection upon Patriarchal life and ethics to say that in that early age they were defective in ideas of that order. Nor is there any reason why we should impose upon ourselves the supposition that the ages of the Patriarchs, or the age of Moses, Joshua, or even David, had the same exact sense of the natural right of the individual man that the world now, after ages of Divine schooling, has attained; for this would be to

be guilty of antedating the effect to the cause, and to expect beforehand that very standard which was to follow *after* or *from* the course of the Divine dispensations;—that very estimate and point of view in the beginning of the Divine education which was to be the end and the result of it. That man was made in the image of God was indeed the original truth which contained the independent and true individuality of the being; but this germinal truth wanted development, and Patriarchal life was antecedent to that development.

It is not unworthy of notice that the degree of the *jus naturale* of the individual with reference to his own life, and his own property in it, is not even yet an entirely settled question in the world; that upon the primary article of the right to deprive man of life, men are not even yet agreed; and while the generality maintain the justice of taking it away in self-defence, or for the punishment of crime, a considerable minority deny the right of civil justice to interfere with human life; and one sect maintains the absolute inviolability of human life. If the question then of the degree of the individual's right and property in life is not even yet decided, and considerable uncertainty still attaches to it, this may help us to understand in what obscurity the whole question of the right of life might lie in the earliest ages of the world, when law was first emerging out of a state of nature, and before the rights of the ruler had undergone any scrutiny: and to understand too how this obscurity could exist even in the

Patriarchal mind, without any reflection upon it, simply by reason of the age of the world to which it belonged. Human power is a limited idea in modern society,—how far its rights extend with respect to the individual: but then human power was an unlimited idea, without definite boundary or check; what it could do or what it could not do to the individual was all in confusion; and in the haze which rested upon this whole subject, one idea was dominant, viz. that one man belonged to another, and was an appendage to another, the son to the father, the servant to the master, and the like. The principle of the inviolability of human life was indeed always admitted in a degree, but it was the degree of the inviolability upon which the morality of particular interferences with life, and the sufficiency of particular reasons for that interference, hinged.

It must be remembered that this conception of man, as the property of and the appendage to another, is not one which involves any cruelty, any harshness. A father may regard his son as being, as a matter of *right*, his property; and yet this very son may be to him his dearest treasure, and the loss of him may be the bitterest grief. The idea does not interfere with the tenderest inward relations of a father to him. When Reuben says, "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee"[1]—the speech

[1] Gen. xlii. 37. "Among the Jews, as among most nations of antiquity, the parental power was absolutely despotic, even to life and death. The *Mosaic* law, however, enacted that a guilty son could not be punished with death, except by the judicial sentence of the community."—Milman's *History of the Jews*, vol. i. p. 22.

certainly shows that the father of the Patriarchal age regarded the son as belonging to him, as being in a way his property, so that as a matter of right his life was lawfully at his disposal. But it does not show want of paternal affection, or that he made the offer in any other spirit than that of self-sacrifice; as a surrender just of the very article of property which was dearest to him, when the preservation of the whole community was at stake; and a hostage and pledge for the safety of Jacob's beloved son seemed to be wanted in the severe extremity. The idea of property is in no contradiction at all to love; human love regards the being; and the rights with respect to the being do not alter the being. This is a question of what you can do to another: his own value to you, dearness to you, is another thing. The life may be worth anything to you; but the *jus*—the particular right, your power over it, is a distinct idea. It might be said in some despotisms, the power only heightens the love; because the absolute dependence of another would be an actual claim upon affection, and his being at your mercy would give him at once an acceptableness in your sight.

Undoubtedly the defective conception of human individuality was an *opening* for cruelty and oppression, and the greatest practical enormities; but it does not in itself involve them. As proofs of the existence of this universal defective conception in ancient society, I referred above to Sparta, Rome, and the prevalence of human sacrifices. But though this original defect of conception was a *condition* of the

rise of these inhuman codes and this ferocious practice, and though they could not have arisen without it, this is not to say that the mere defect of conception itself amounted to inhumanity, or that it necessarily produced inhumanity. It was in itself a neutral intellectual defect. And though the savage character of some communities founded cruel and oppressive practices upon it, there is no reason why it may not have existed in other communities and in the Jewish, without such results, and with the tone of society not brutalised and made cruel by it.

With this defective idea, then, of human individuality, with this way of regarding one man as belonging to another man, established in the ancient mind and in the Patriarchal mind generally, we come to the act of the great Patriarch. In the present age, with the principle of human individuality and right now developed and become the law of our conduct to man, an interference on our part with the life of the human independent being, supposed to be innocent, is so utterly incongruous, that a miracle on the side of such an act would necessarily be interpreted by us as a trial of faith, and not as evidence of a Divine command. But in the Patriarch's age there was not that moral-political conception of man which constitutes this counterbalance to the miracle, and therefore he gave the miracle that interpretation which was the more obvious one, and which was in fact intended by God, of evidence of a Divine command. In his case there was the miracle, but there was not the weight in the opposite scale—the evidence within which conflicted

with the evidence without. There was not that idea, which it belonged to the subsequent Divine education to develop in the world—the principle that a man is an independent individual being, in distinction to his being the appendage of another man. We are struck immediately in the Scripture account of the sacrifice of Isaac with the habitual sense of ownership—as distinct from conferred momentary command,—with the entire absence of all struggle in the mind of the Patriarch; how he simply regards his son as a treasure of his own which he has to give up, a treasure which is dearer to him than any other earthly thing, and which it is the greatest trial of his life to part with, but which is still his own, *belonging* to him and appropriate to him to surrender. This is the impression which the whole of the scene itself raises. Indeed, if any one imagines that the idea of property in the human being could be incompatible with the greatest tenderness of affection, such an unreasonable notion must vanish with the solemn and beautiful account in Scripture. The tenderness of affection for the son, in the very act of surrendering him as his property, is prominent in this picture. But still he *is* the property; the ancient idea of the son as belonging to the father pervades the whole account. It is *as* his own property that he surrenders and sacrifices the son. No description of this wonderful transaction could have more clearly exhibited how entirely consistent the sense of property in the individual is with the value, the preciousness, of that individual. If there really were any one who

could suppose that a man's interest and delight in something that belonged to him was *less because* it belonged to him; that his property was less dear to him because it was his property; such an extraordinary inference would certainly be wholly confuted by this passage of Bible history. If any one could really think that the transcendent greatness of the sacrifice and the surrender, would be in the least affected by the circumstance that what a man was called upon to surrender was a treasure of his own, something which belonged to him, something which was part of himself, such a mistake must be corrected by this description. The son in this representation belongs to the father; and when we come to examine and authenticate that impression we find it is what the whole history of the ancient mind verifies. The father, according to the ideas of the age, regarded the son as his own, in such a sense as made the sacrifice a sacrifice of what belonged to the father, and which was appropriate to the father to surrender. But at the present day the man belongs to himself and not to another; his life is his own; and to sacrifice that life is to sacrifice what is the property of that man and of no other, to give up that which is not yours to give. The great Patriarch was thus a natural subject of a Divine command to sacrifice his son; because, in consequence of the earlier ideas then prevailing, nothing interposed between his own convictions and the authority of the miracle; but a miracle to do such an act would be utterly incongruous at the present day, when no external evidence to sacrifice another's life could possibly outweigh

the strong internal convictions which forbid the interference with it.

The general conclusion is, that according to the very conditions of miraculous evidence laid down in Scripture, civilisation must in some cases affect the relevancy of miracles as evidence of Divine commands. Abstractedly the Lord of human life can command the destruction of that life; but the question before us is a question not of abstract propositions only, but of what there is *evidence* of; and civilisation affects the question of evidence; affects it upon the principles of Scripture itself. The Scripture law of miraculous evidence qualifies and checks that evidence by the rival force of inward moral grounds and principles. The unity of God was no sooner established than miracles were nugatory in favour of idolatry; and the truths of the Gospel were no sooner established than miracles became nugatory in favour of another gospel. And this Scriptural principle of counteraction to miraculous evidence must apply as well to any other moral grounds and principles of which we feel certain, and which have established themselves in our moral standard. But civilisation *does* create such grounds and principles in our minds, because civilisation is not entirely a material movement but is also a moral movement — moral in regard to some principles of human right and practice. In the moral progress of mankind in the later ages of the world, the intense conviction has sprung up of certain truths respecting man, and certain principles of right and justice in regard to man; and these principles within us become

counter-evidence to the authority of miracles, when those profess to command acts which are in an opposite direction. In those cases, therefore, the growth of civilisation affects the authority of miracles and the argument from miracles. For the more certain we become of any truth regarding God or man, the more are we out of the power of being convinced by a miracle which would lead in a contrary direction to that truth. In this way the progress of mankind must gradually exclude certain homicidal acts, as subjects of Divine command, upon miraculous evidence. The Scripture philosophy of miracles enforces a fresh modification of the doctrine of miraculous evidence, upon fresh moral convictions arising. Before the ideas of natural right were developed, homicidal Divine command was capable of miraculous evidence; but suppose these ideas developed, then the *inward* antagonism to the acts is so strong that they cannot be surmounted by anything miraculous that is only *outward;* and the alternative becomes unavoidable, that the miracle is for the other purpose mentioned in Scripture, viz. the trial of faith, and not the support of a command.

But in this state of the case, in which the miraculous evidence of a certain class of Divine commands is necessarily neutralised, it becomes impossible to suppose that there will be the Divine commands; and therefore what has been said amounts to this, that God adapts His commands to different ages. It is unreasonable to suppose that God would now work miracles in cases in which His own educating providence has

neutralised them as evidence of His commands: that is to say, He would not now give the command. But that He would not give such commands now, is not to say that He might not give them in a former age, when such commands had an appropriate and natural mode of proof; viz. by miracles—that is, by the full evidence which miracles had, before that evidence was modified by the ideas which His own educatory providence has since instilled. God adapts His employment of miracles to the state of evidence; which, upon the Scriptural rule, differs with man's different states of enlightenment; and with the evidence *for* the commands, necessarily also withdraws the commands; and thus we come, as to the ultimate position, to the rule of Divine wisdom, that God suits His commands to the age; and gives or withholds them according as man is a natural recipient of them.

It will indeed be denied by some that such miracles to command such acts ever really took place; and it will be said that these were simply actions of the age, inspired, both on their good and their bad side, by the spirit of the age in which they were done. But such a question as this, however necessary to meet in its proper place, is not one which appertains to the particular section of Old Testament inquiry now under discussion. In examining the morality of the Old Testament, we must take the actions of the Old Testament history as they are there given; we are not concerned with other actions, or, what is the same thing, with the actions as otherwise described. An objector to Scripture history may consider himself

necessitated by his own ideas to make a fundamental difference in the account of these classes of actions as given in Scripture; he may not believe in miracles, and, in accordance with this belief, he may refuse to hold that these classes of actions were ever commanded by miracles. But we are not concerned upon the point now under discussion with such a conjectural speculation as this, which would assign a different basis to the actions of the Old Testament.

Upon the question of the morality of the Old Testament, we must assume the actions of the Old Testament as they stand; for the moral standard of the Old Testament cannot be responsible for any other. The Bible cannot be made responsible for actions which are not contained in it,—for *other* actions than those which it describes; for actions grounded upon different motives and different reasons and premisses.

In the case of the homicidal class of actions, the evidence of a Divine command constitutes, in the Old Testament, the very ground of their justification; this special authorisation is no superfluity, but the absolute need of the transaction, without which it is unwarrantable and indefensible. The defective idea of the individual's right, inherent in the age, was indeed the condition of the acceptance of the miraculous evidence of the command when given; but it did not authorise the act of itself, without the command. It was the Divine command, then, which made, according to the standard of the Old Testament, the distinction between the patriarchal acts in violation of human life, and the heathen ones, which were in violation of the same

principle; and we may add as well, between some Jewish homicidal acts and others. No one could possibly compare the ground upon which the sacrifice of Isaac stands in the Old Testament, with the ground upon which Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter stands. The latter is mentioned as a simple fact, without the shadow of an approval; because indeed it was, like the heathen acts of that kind, unauthorised. The former is extolled as the very model of faith and self-surrender. The punishment of the children on account of the father's crime was prohibited in the Jewish code, and was, as a matter of human law, condemned.[1] It was the special Divine command which alone was regarded as authorising it in the Old Testament.

But it will be said, perhaps, Can we suppose God taking advantage of an actually inferior state of ideas in the world, in order to give a particular command, which He would not give in an age of higher and more mature ideas? Can we suppose Him working a miracle for it then, because, in an inferior state of ideas on moral subjects, a miracle could not be in conflict with internal evidence? It may be replied that such a discriminating proceeding would doubtless be an instance of accommodation; but why not of wise accommodation? It seems to belong suitably to the Divine Governor of the world to extract out of every state of mankind the highest and most noble acts to which the special conceptions of the age can give rise, and direct those earlier ideas and modes of thinking toward such great moral achievements

[1] Deut. xxiv. 16.

as are able to be founded upon them. If there is a progress in ideas, why should not one stage as well as another, a former stage as well as a later, a ruder as well as a more enlightened, express itself according to its own model, and present to God the various developments in act, of the same fundamentally virtuous will? Let man show forth all the good that he is capable of, in the mode and manner in which he is capable of it. If in earlier ages he was unshackled by the later ideas of the individual's right and property in life, and if it so happened that a very wonderful and extraordinary self-sacrifice could be drawn out of this very want in the age, why should not the human mind be directed in the way of that sacrifice, and that great religious self-surrender be extracted from it by a Divine command?

Such an act was the sacrifice of Isaac, and such was the state of ideas which preceded it as the conditions of the act. The self-sacrifice in the act is obvious from the history. It was, in the first place, neither more nor less than to all appearance total ruin—the downfall of every hope, and the collapse of a life. To an ordinary man of business even, if he has any spirit, the breakdown of a life's work is a dreadful thought; because he wants to feel—and it is a legitimate want—that he has done something, and that he has been somebody. But the Patriarch had through life felt himself the minister and instrument of a great Divine design with respect to mankind: he had lived with a gigantic prospect before him, with an immense expanding blessing, which was one

day to include all nations and be the restoration of the world. This vast plan then, his part in which had been the work of his life, and had filled his mind with immeasurable hopes, as it had been sown in his son, would perish with his son. Then all was over, and his life had come to nothing. This is one side of the act of self-sacrifice, but it is not all; for the child himself, he upon whom such a promise hung, such boundless hope, such a vast calculation, and who was loved all the more with a father's love because he was the harbinger of the prophet's greatness, the symbol of life's purpose answered;—he was to be surrendered too. Such was the act of the sacrifice of Isaac. But it required the particular state of ideas in the world at that time, and the defective state of ideas respecting the right of the individual man, for this great act to be brought out. Without those ideas it could not have been the subject of Divine command, having evidence that it *was* a Divine command; a miracle would not be evidence to *us* that God bade a father kill an innocent son: if it was, as it was, evidence to Abraham, it was because that clear idea of the individual right, which involved the inviolability of life, did not exist in his age as it does in ours; it was because the Patriarch of that day had the political ideas of his day,—of one person belonging to another, and the son being the appendage of the father. It was out of an inferior state of ideas in regard to human right, out of a lower political sense, that an act of romantic and sublime self-sacrifice was extracted; and the very want in the

age was used as a means of developing the religion of the man. And this was a step which it was suitable for the Governor of the world to take; because it enlarged the amount of human virtue, it made even the shortcomings of the time subservient to the perfection of the individual; and it brought out a great religious act which was to be a lesson and a type to all ages.

It must be observed that great acts are a decided part of the providential plan for the education of mankind. The peculiar and superior force of acts in this direction, as compared with general *character*, is gained upon a principle which is very intelligible. A great act gathers up and brings to a focus the whole habit and general character of the man. The act is dramatic, while the man's habit or character is didactic only; and what is more, there is a limitation in character which there is not in an act. There is a boundlessness in an act. It is not a divided, balanced thing, but is like an immense spring or leap. The whole of the man is in it, and at one great stroke is revealed. A great act has thus a place in time; it is like a great poem, a great law, a great battle, any great event; it is a movement; it is a type which fructifies and reproduces itself. Single acts are treasures. They are like new ideas in people's minds. There is something in them which moulds, which lifts up to another level, and gives an impulse to human nature. If we examine any one of those signal acts which are historical, we shall find that they could none of them have been done but for some one great idea

with which the person was possessed, and to which he had attached himself. Thus, if we examine the act of Titus Manlius in executing his son, after crowning him victor, in justice to the violated majesty of Roman law, there must have been in his mind a kind of boundless idea of Rome,—of what Rome was; that it was greater than any conceivable form of greatness, and transcended all imaginable empire. Rome was to him the impersonation of supreme order, unconquerable will, indestructible power. Rome was eternal. He then who disobeyed Rome must die; even the youthful victor in the first flush of triumph; and while the father's heart leapt with pride, the Roman general must be inflexible. Thus the famous heathen's self-sacrifice rested upon a boundless idea of the state to which he belonged, and the power to which he owed allegiance.

In the mind of the Patriarch in the place of a great power of earth must be substituted the boundless idea of an invisible Power; where in the heathen father's mind Rome stood, there was God. The Lord of this universe has the right to all we have, and everything must be surrendered to Him upon demand. But upon an Almighty Being rose boundless hope too — the vastness of conception which Scripture specially attributes to Abraham. Hope in the ordinary type, is partly sight; when light has begun to dawn, and the first signs of restoration and renewal appear. Hope is the first sight we catch of returning good, that first gleam of it which heralds and represents the end. But hope which is seen is not hope. It is hope while

all is dark around us,—while as yet there is no visible link between us and the end,—that exhibits the principle in its greatness and in its true energy. And this hope must rest upon that ultimate Power at the very root of things which can reverse every catastrophe and rectify all mistakes. To hold on to this root is hope withdrawn into its last fastness; and, without aid from any sight, grasping with an iron force the rock itself, the foundation of Sovereign Will upon which the universe stands, and saying to itself, "The whole may shake, if this foundation remaineth sure." This was the infinite hope of Abraham. Doubtless while he lifted up the knife to slay his son, the sun was turned to darkness to him, the stars left their places, and earth and heaven vanished from his sight; to the eye of sense all was gone that life had built up, and the promise had come actually to an end for evermore; but to the friend of God all was still as certain as ever, all absolutely sure and fixed; the end, the promise, nay even the son of the promise, even he in the fire of the burnt-offering was not gone, because that was near and close at hand which could restore;—the great Power which could reverse everything. A voice within said, All this can be undone, and can pass away like a dream of the night; and the heir was safe in the strong hope of him who "accounted that God was able to raise him up even from the dead."

Do you say then that such an act could not be done now? That is all the more reason why it should have been done;—why it should have been done when

it could be done; when the state of evidence admitted of it; when the primitive standard of human rights gave the son to be the property of the father, to be surrendered by him, upon a call, as his own treasure. That idea,—that very defective idea of the age,—it was, which rendered possible the very point of the act, the unsurpassable pang of it, the self-inflicted martyrdom of human affection, the death of the son in will, by the father's hand. That idea of the age therefore was used to produce that special fruit which it was adapted to produce; the particular great spiritual act of which it supplied the possibility, and which was the most splendid flower of this stock. If the idea of the age was rude, the act was not the less spiritual which it enabled to be done; because the idea of the age only founded the proprietary right of the father, the spirituality of the act lay in the surrender of the son. The surrender itself was of the highest Gospel type, as being the offering up of the deepest treasure of a man's heart; that which gave him the sharpest agony to part with. And, indeed, we may observe that however rude was the state of ideas which enabled the act to be done, the act itself has been the appropriated lesson not so much of earlier ages as of later, not so much of Jewish times as of Christian: the moral did not come out so clearly in Jewish history; it reserved itself till Judaism had passed away and given place to the Gospel; and though an act of earliest time had its main instructive strength in latest. The distinction then is most important, and should be always kept in

mind, between that state of ideas which enables an act to be done and the act itself. Those were doubtless primitive and rude ideas as to the rights of the individual and the inviolability of life, which made the Divine command to slay an innocent son credible, and a miracle sufficient proof of it; but the spirituality of the surrender was not in the least affected by that circumstance. The ἦθος of the act, the faith, the trust, the resignation, were the same. The act is wholly distinct from the evidence of the obligation to it; the evidence was affected by the age; an eternal and spiritual type distinguished the act.

Thus, far from any lowering effect attaching to the principle that God makes use of the ruder conditions of the human mind, and accommodates His commands to different ages, on the contrary, this principle has produced the highest result. The rudeness of the age admits of having the most exalted acts built upon it, and acts which last as exemplars through future ages of enlightenment. This principle does not permit the earlier conditions of human thought to lie fallow and barren, but extracts out of every state of the human mind its proper effort, and makes the best of every age in keeping with its fundamental ideas. Every period of the world contributes the special expression of moral beauty and greatness of which it admits; and that magnificent and extraordinary act of romantic morals which cannot be obtained from a higher state of civilisation is extracted from a lower. Never again, indeed, while the world lasts, can that

act be done within the Church of God: but that it has been done is the wealth of the Church and of mankind; and is the fruit of the spiritual policy of that Great Being who has educated the world, and who has worked to the highest advantage every stage in the moral progress of mankind.

LECTURE III.

HUMAN SACRIFICES.

I DEVOTED one Lecture to the general character and situation of Abraham; because when we have to judge upon one very remarkable act of a man, it is an advantage to have the man himself before us. An explanation popular with one school, of the act of the sacrifice of Isaac, is, that it was simply one of the class of human sacrifices which were common at that day, and especially among the Canaanitish races; that Abraham was seized with an enthusiasm of that sanguinary type which propitiated God by human victims; and that he made Isaac the victim. It does not appear to me that such a solution is at all necessary, but that, on the contrary, it clashes with the whole history of Abraham, and the whole colour of his life and character; while at the same time it degrades and calumniates the Patriarch. That the Patriarch of that day should not meet the miraculous evidence of a Divine command to slay an innocent son, by the same counter internal evidence that we should oppose to it now, and that he was unable to feel this inward impediment, on account of the defective moral and political conceptions of that day,—the inadequate sense of human individuality and human rights,—is an

explanation which does not lower the Patriarch in our eyes; because it only charges him with ideas which belonged to that age of the world, and were necessary in that stage of human progress. This explanation acknowledges a Divine command, and that the act was done in obedience to a Divine command; and it only requires that the command was accommodated to an earlier state of ideas regarding the human being and his rights. But to attribute to Abraham such a defective state of ideas on this subject is a totally different thing from implicating him in a gross and cruel superstition which sacrificed its thousands upon inhuman altars as a propitiation to sanguinary idols.

To represent him only as without a certain class of ideas relating to humanity, which had not yet arisen in the world, is a completely different thing from regarding him as implicated in a horrible and vile usage, which was a lapse and a fall from the antecedent religion of the world;—from making him a follower and disciple of the Canaanites.

In comparing, then, these two explanations with reference to the internal evidences of Scripture bearing upon them, and their agreement with the facts of Abraham's life and character, I must observe first, that the whole portrait which Scripture gives us of Abraham, and which formed the subject of the first Lecture, is altogether in opposition to such a solution of the sacrifice of Isaac as would make it a copy of the human sacrifices of the Canaanites. It is indeed doubtful whether the introduction of human sacrifices into the

worship of these people was so early as to be contemporaneous with Abraham. This is a disputed point. Some able historical critics have arrived at a contrary conclusion, and the terms on which Abraham stood with the Canaanites and their chiefs would serve to show that the worship of the Canaanites of his day was a less advanced form of idolatry than that which prevailed in a later age. He is told that his descendants, and not himself, shall possess the land, *because* "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full;"[1] and certainly, if we compare the aspect in which the Canaanites present themselves to the eyes of Moses, the character which he gives them, and the detestation with which he regards them, with the apparent relations of Abraham to the same people, we cannot but see a marked difference in the earlier and later feeling, such as would imply that these religious corruptions had not grown to such a height in Abraham's age. But even granting that the Canaanites offered human sacrifices in Abraham's time, the whole facts of the case, as recorded in Scripture, contradict the supposition that the sacrifice of Isaac was put into the Patriarch's mind by the sight of the superstitious worship of those idolatrous races. The whole character of Abraham is *in limine* opposed to such a notion as that of his *borrowing* from the Canaanites in religion. For suppose a man of lofty independence of mind, who had cast off the traditions of his own country, rejected human authority, discarded idols, and embraced the true rational conception of a God,

[1] Gen. xv. 16.

to whom he appropriated a spiritual worship, adoring Him under no material form but in His own invisible essence; supposing him standing alone in his day in maintaining this pure worship, but casting his eye forward upon a distant era in the world's future, when that worship should become universal and gain "all the families of the earth;" suppose a man of this remarkable type,—this enlightenment and perception of deep truth,—surrounded by the slaves of a grovelling superstition, enjoining cruel and inhuman rites; would it be the natural tendency of such a man to accept the lead of that low religion, to borrow from its worst rites, and allow them to dictate a great and critical act of his religious life to him? Such an idea would not enter into his mind. Such a man would look down with a vast sense of superiority upon so degraded a form of religion, and would pass sentence on it as a judge; but would not dream of the attitude towards it of a learner, imitating its inhuman practices, and permitting them to originate an act of worship for him. The very thought of bowing to such an authority would be degradation and contamination to him.

But the plain narrative of Scripture forbids such a supposition as this, because it represents the act of sacrifice as commanded expressly by God—nor only as commanded by God, but as praised by God. Scripture extols it indeed as an act of the sublimest devotion and faith, and exhibits it as the ground of an additional and overflowing renewal of the Divine promise to the Patriarch, which is confirmed by an

oath and is vouchsafed to him not as the reward of any former action or actions, but specially and singly on account of this action;—"*Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son*, I have sworn that in blessing I will bless thee."[1] Such an account of this action is plainly inconsistent with its having been done in imitation of the gross and cruel superstitions of Canaanites, and excludes *that* rationale of it altogether.

It has indeed been observed that God's moving a man to do some action is not, in the language of Scripture, inconsistent with the motion being also at the same time a temptation of Satan; and the case is pointed to of the two different phrases about the sin of David in numbering the people, used respectively in the Book of Samuel[2] and the Book of Chronicles;[3] in the first of which books God is said to have moved David to do this act, and in the latter Satan is said to have moved him. But though it may be admitted that there is nothing in God moving a man to do something, regarded as a phrase, inconsistent with Satan moving him also, this remark is totally irrelevant in a case in which God not only moves a man to do an act, but also praises that act when done. It may be true that Satan may move a man whom God in a certain sense moves too,—moves in the sense of permitting Satan or his own lusts to move him; and in this sense God moved David to number Israel, while the same motive was also a temptation of Satan. But it is impossible that Satan should move a man

[1] Gen. xxii. 16. [2] 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. [3] 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

to do an act which God moves him to, and which God *also* praises after it is done. The latter is the turning point which decides definitively in the present case that Satan did not move Abraham, because the act of Abraham being commended by God, was good; and it is impossible that Satan should move a man to do a good act. In the case of Balaam it may be observed that God moved in a sense. He told Balaam "to rise up and go with the men." But the context shows that was only a direction given to Balaam upon the assumption that he chose to follow his own will; for God's anger was kindled because he went. In the case of Balaam, therefore, God's moving was quite consistent with Satan's moving. But had the act of Balaam been praised by God instead of calling down the Divine censure, no motion from Satan could have been compatible with the Divine motion.

But when, from the moral character of Abraham, we turn to the actual plan of his life and trial, we find still stronger evidence against the hypothesis of a copy of the human sacrifices of the Canaanites; because we find that this hypothesis is at variance with the whole plan and purpose of the life-trial of Abraham,—that that trial implies in its whole construction a totally different object and purpose for the sacrifice of Isaac than that which this hypothesis requires.

It is of the very essence of a propitiatory sacrifice that the offerer should contemplate the total loss of the precious victim which he surrenders into the

hands of offended deity.[1] The sacrifice is made as a self-inflicted punishment; its very object is the parting with a treasure, the final surrender of something dear and valuable which belongs to him. There has been sin, and sin must be atoned for by a voluntary act of self-deprivation. In a word, the purpose of propitiatory sacrifice is penal. And this is historically the character of human sacrifices; they are propitiatory; they are designed to appease the anger of an offended deity, by a father's *loss* of a son or daughter, whom he sacrifices. Thus the angry divinities of Greece, who detained the fleet at Aulis, were supposed to be pacified by Agamemnon's loss of Iphigenia; and Mesha, king of Moab, sacrificed his son to Chemosh, upon the idea that he should gratify Chemosh by the total loss of his son, which he voluntarily imposed on himself. But the whole plan and purpose of the trial of Abraham excludes the contemplation on Abraham's part of the total loss of Isaac, the heir of the promise, and requires that he should look forward to the miraculous restoration of his son after death; imposing on him indeed in this confident expectation a piercing trial of his faith, but not an

[1] I am speaking here of the propitiatory sacrifice, according to the human notion of it, according to what it has always meant as a part of human worship, and an act of man himself offering up something in atonement for his sins. The same condition, however, attached to the mystery of the real Propitiatory Sacrifice, only with that qualification which was necessary to fulfil the Divine plan. For although our Lord ever foresaw His own Resurrection as immediately succeeding His death, He did not rise again for the purpose of continuing His life upon earth, which life He had sacrificed, but only to give evidence of the reality of His propitiation, and for other purposes.

absolute and perpetual loss of his son. This is the interpretation which the New Testament puts upon the act of Abraham: "Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: *accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead;* from whence also he received him in a figure." [1]

We observe that the whole life of Abraham turns upon one great trial—the trial, viz., of his faith in the Divine promise to him of a son to be the seed of a whole nation, and by being the seed of a whole nation be the channel of a great future blessing to the whole world. This is what he has to believe. But at first he has not got a son. The trial therefore of his faith is to believe that he shall have one; and this part of his trial lasts a long time, and the Patriarch's faith gives way under it twice. The first occasion is, when, in despair of a real heir, he substitutes his steward Eliezer as an adopted one. He becomes conscious that this is only a makeshift and an expedient of his own, gives up the arrangement, supplicates God for a real heir, is promised a real heir, and believes that promise. "And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.[2] And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be

[1] Heb. xi. 17-19.

[2] Gen. xv. 2, 3, 4, 6.

thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." The second occasion on which the Patriarch's faith gives way is, when, at the suggestion of Sarah herself, he sets up another substitute for a true heir, in the person of a real son, but a son by a representative wife—Hagar, whom Sarah appoints in her own place. This divergence from the straight course of faith lasts some years, though the true belief in the gift of a real heir some day, is never wholly suppressed; and the confidence in the heirship of Ishmael never appears to exceed a kind of despondent wish that he *might be* accepted as the heir *in case* none other came. "Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee!" Again, however, the promise of a true heir is renewed; twice renewed. Abraham, after a short tumult of doubt in his mind, believes absolutely, while Sarah is rebuked for her unbelief; and then the son is born. This is the final triumph of faith in Abraham, in the matter of the *birth* of a son. For a long time belief has been mixed with doubt, or been broken by intervals of doubt; but at last, just when this event is most improbable, nay, humanly speaking impossible, at the very acme of its trial faith conquers.

Such then being the preceding course of trial in Abraham's life, Scripture informs us that the command to sacrifice Isaac was but a carrying out of the same plan of probation; only that whereas, before the birth of the heir, the birth was the subject of the trial of his faith, now it is the preservation of

the heir born;—that under the most desperate circumstances, despite even of complete apparent impossibilities, even in the extreme case of the actual natural death of that son, God would so contrive as to secure his continuance, to be the seed of the future nation and channel of the future blessing.

The trial in the sacrifice of Isaac is, whether Abraham would believe that God could raise him up to life again; and the merit of Abraham in that sacrifice is the merit of rising to this belief. His trial hitherto had been to believe that Isaac would, under such great apparent improbabilities and against the order of nature, *be born;* his trial now was, while contemplating his sacrifice, to believe that, under such great apparent improbabilities and against the order of nature, he should *survive.* But the one trial was a continuation of and carrying on of the other. The probation of Abraham is upon one plan and method, and one part corresponds to and follows up another. A cloud of mystery encompassed the gift of the heir; it first rested upon his birth; and when that mystery was cleared up, the same cloud reappeared and rested upon his continuance in life. The great Power which so long delayed the gift now demands the surrender of it. The trial of the Patriarch is, that he has to pierce through the cloud in either case, and that faith must foresee, as in the first instance a birth, so in the second instance a restoration.

Scripture then has given us an explanation of the act of Abraham in offering up Isaac; has told us

what the act was, *i.e.*, what it was in the mind of the agent; its scope and meaning, the peculiarity of the expectation upon which it was based; and we collect with certainty from this Scriptural account of the act that it was not a propitiatory sacrifice. It is wanting in all the essentials of such a sacrifice. The object of it was not loss or punishment, but a certain extraordinary manifestation of faith which is thereby elicited from him,—faith in the continuance of the life of Isaac, against the laws of nature, to be the heir and transmitter of the promise.[1] No sin indeed of Abraham's is mentioned for which he has to atone, and so the notion of a propitiatory sacrifice is gratuitous; but there is also abundant positive evidence of another and a different purpose in the sacrifice; a purpose which actually conflicted with the idea of a propitiatory sacrifice; for the idea of the total loss of the thing offered is essential to a propitiatory sacrifice; but it was essential to the trial of faith in this case that the thing offered should not be looked upon as totally lost, but, on the contrary, as about to be restored. It is the only merit of Abraham in the performance of this act, that he believes that the *victim will survive it.* As the heir of the promise

[1] Heb. xi. 17-19. There is an allusion to the same explanation of Abraham's sacrifice in Rom. iv. 16, and *seq.* . . . . "The faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all," because that (*κατέναντι οὗ*) he believed God "*who quickeneth the dead*, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." We may observe that the passage as a whole is a parallel to the passage in Hebrews, connecting as it does the birth of Isaac with the same kind of trial of faith as that which the passage in Hebrews connects with the sacrifice of Isaac.—See *Note* 2.

and the guaranteed link between the Patriarch and the future nation and blessing, the Divine word is pledged for the continuance of Isaac's life upon earth. Abraham relies upon this word. But in the very act of thus relying upon it, he does *not* surrender Isaac for good, he does not contemplate his final loss, he does not look forward to a permanent parting with him. He expects the restoration of the victim. His act, then, is entirely deficient in those characteristics which are necessary to the idea of a propitiatory sacrifice.[1] He contemplates an issue which negatives

[1] "The faith of Abraham was to pass through a more trying ordeal. He is suddenly commanded to cut off that life on which all the splendid promises of the Almighty seemed to depend. He obeys, and sets forth with his unsuspecting child to offer the fatal sacrifice on Mount Moriah. The immolation of human sacrifices, particularly of the most precious, the favourite, the first-born child, appears as a common usage among many early nations, more especially the tribes by which Abraham was surrounded. It was the distinguishing rite among the worshippers of Moloch; at a later period of the Jewish history it was practised by a king of Moab; it was undoubtedly derived by the Carthaginians from their Phœnician ancestors on the shores of Syria. The offering of Isaac bears no resemblance, either in its nature, or what may be termed its moral purport, to these horrid rites. Where it was an ordinary usage, as in the worship of Moloch, it was in unison with the character of the religion, and of the deity. It was the last act of a dark and sanguinary superstition, which rose by regular gradation to this complete triumph over human nature. The god who was propitiated by these offerings, had been satiated with more cheap and vulgar victims; he had been glutted to the full with human suffering and with human blood. In general it was the final mark of the subjugation of the national mind to an inhuman and domineering priesthood. But the Hebrew religion held human sacrifices in abhorrence; the God of the Abrahamitic family, uniformly beneficent, imposed no duties which entailed human suffering, demanded no offerings which were repugnant to the better feelings of our nature. Where, on the other hand, these filial sacrifices were of rare and extraordinary occurrence, they were either to expiate some

it as such a sacrifice : and it is his merit, and it belongs to the very nature of his probation in this matter, that he should do so.

It may be objected, perhaps, that this account of the transaction does not allow that which appears to be an essential feature of the sacrifice on Mount Moriah, the real surrender on Abraham's part of the object of his deepest affections. It may be said that this sacrifice was undoubtedly an act of mortification and the surrender of a treasure, and that, as such, it has been regarded in all ages as the type of the self-denying and self-sacrificing life ; but that if Abraham all along looked, and looked with confidence, to the recovery of his treasure, there was no true surrender and no sacrifice in this act. It would, however, be a great mistake to say that, because there was the contemplation of a recovery here, there was therefore no act of surrender or sacrifice. It must be considered, if Abraham resigns the possession of his son by cutting asunder the common bond of life, that that is a true resignation of him. Death is an undeniable test of the act of surrender. If the Patriarch looked beyond death, to a recovery, that did not negative the surrender which *ipso facto* had taken place in death.

dreadful guilt, to avert the imminent vengeance of the offended deity, or to extort his blessing on some important enterprise. But the offering of Isaac was neither piacular nor propitiatory. . . . It was a simple act of unhesitating obedience to the Divine command ; the last proof of perfect reliance on the certain accomplishment of the Divine promises. Isaac, so miraculously bestowed, could be as miraculously restored ; Abraham, such is the comment of the Christian Apostle, *believed that God could even raise him up from the dead.*"—Milman's *History of the Jews*, vol. i. p. 20.

Such a yielding up was losing sight of him, seeing him vanish from time, from visible nature; it was parting with him, according to physical law, for ever. Had the father clutched the prize of a son, and once got, had refused to part with him out of his sight, that would have been the denial of surrender; but the Patriarch in this act committed him resignedly into God's hands, and trusted him beyond the borders of the material world into an invisible keeping. He contemplated without shrinking an awful chasm in the earthly life of the heir; he saw him for a moment swallowed up in the abyss, and only to be restored to him by a mysterious hand. But this was an act of true self-sacrifice, and involved a true surrender of a dear possession.

The explanation, then, of the act of the sacrifice of Isaac by supposing it to be a copy of the human sacrifices of the Canaanites, breaks down at every step. It fails first by being in total disagreement with the character and mind of Abraham; it fails next by being in absolute discord with the whole plan and purpose of the life-trial of Abraham. There is nothing in the account given of the act in the slightest degree to connect it with such a worship and such a motive. The human sacrifices of the ancient world were in atonement for public crimes, and were offered up in great national emergencies, when war or pestilence threatened the very existence of the people, and there was a cry for a great deliverance. They were at any rate propitiatory, and supposed bloodshed, or sacrilege, or some heinous

crime, as the occasion of them. But here there is no crime mentioned for which propitiation is wanted. On the other hand, the trial upon which the life of the Patriarch turns is clear and conspicuous; and that demands a sacrifice which is not propitiatory, but which is simply a trial of faith. A sceptic will have his own explanation to give of a life turning upon such a trial; but even he, if he takes the account as it stands, must admit that it is wholly opposed to the idea of the Patriarch's surrender of his son as a propitiatory sacrifice:—that the Patriarch's act stands upon other ground, and that the motives and the prospects in the case have nothing in common with those which originate a propitiatory human sacrifice. He will attribute the Patriarch's faith in the restoration of Isaac from the dead, to a visionary and wild fanaticism; but even he will not dispute, as an historical truth, that Abraham was perfectly capable of looking forward to such a solution of the difficulty, of believing in such a miracle: that his eye could overleap the dark chasm, and see his son standing safe on the other side of it; and that he was of such a mind and spirit as that he could unhesitatingly believe that the heir of the promise would issue alive out of the very jaws of death. This state of mind may be amazing to him—a transformation and revolutionising of human nature; but that it has existed in men the most absolute infidel cannot doubt. The whole religion of the Bible is, from beginning to end, historically founded upon this absolute faith in an absolutely omnipotent God. But such a belief, in

the mind of the Patriarch, in a certain restoration of Isaac,—if we contemplate it only as a physiological fact,—excludes wholly the intention of a propitiatory sacrifice, *i.e.*, a human sacrifice in the ordinary meaning of that term, and separates the motive and design of it altogether from that religious basis.

Such is the preponderance of evidence *against* the interpretation of a human sacrifice, drawn from the whole life of Abraham, its order, course, character, and plan; the whole internal evidence of the narrative is a protest against such a construction; while, on the *side* of that interpretation, there is only one fact, viz. that there were such sacrifices in the ancient world.

But while the sacrifice of Abraham was in itself, and as a commanded action, a trial of the Patriarch's faith and not a propitiatory act, it was yet designed that it should at the same time be a type and figure of the great Propitiation.[1] For it is not essential to a type that it should be a complete resemblance and copy of that event of which it is the type, and should in all respects follow the pattern of the antetype. In the sacrifice of Abraham and in the sacrifice on the

[1] "Of all the Prophetic Types, says Mr. Davison, this one, in the commanded sacrifice of Isaac, appears to be among the most significant. It stands at the head of the dispensation of Revealed Religion, as reduced into Covenant with the people of God in the person of their Founder and Progenitor. Being thus displayed, as it is, in the history of the *Father of the Faithful*, it seems to be wrought into the foundations of Faith. In the surrender to Sacrifice of a beloved son, the Patriarchal Church *begins* with an adumbration of the Christian reality."—*Inquiry into Primitive Sacrifice.* Davison's *Remains*, p. 150.

Cross the difference of scope and design in regard to atonement leaves still a common external ground of surrender; and the outward action or representation contained in the former, of a father offering up his only son upon the altar of wood, fulfils all the outward requirements of a type. The lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness was not propitiatory, but there was in it and the propitiatory sacrifice on the Cross the common principle of restoration proceeding from a certain action, such action being first apprehended by faith; and the outward representation contained in the lifting up of the serpent had the outward likeness required for a type.

But it may be asked—Was it simply a curious coincidence that the surrounding nations offered up human sacrifices, and that Abraham offered up a human sacrifice? The answer is that the external resemblance is not fortuitous, but that the two are really connected by the common principle of sacrifice or surrender. First, the heathen recognised the principle of *sacrifice in general*, or the giving up of something precious, as a mark of devotion to the deity; and this principle is common to the heathen and to the Jewish and Patriarchal sacrifices in general. Secondly, *human* sacrifices were a monstrous and extravagant expression, but still an expression, of this principle. They proceeded upon the assumption that human life was the most valuable of all things, and especially that a child was the most precious possession of a father, from which it appeared to follow that such a sacrifice was in place in extra-

ordinary emergencies. This principle of self-sacrifice then, and in the very form of the sacrifice of a son, is common to the heathen human sacrifices and to Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. But when one common element has been admitted, the difference is such as to completely separate the two from each other as religious acts ; the one being only a trial of faith, the other the propitiation of an angry divinity.

Such are the two hypotheses which have occupied our attention with regard to the act of the sacrifice of Isaac. There is the explanation of the act, as an act of taking away the life of another, which was given in the last Lecture, and there is the explanation of it as a human sacrifice, in agreement with the cruel superstitious custom of the day, in heathen countries. The explanation which was given in the last Lecture was, that the conceptions of the day, with respect to one man as being the property of another,—the subject of the monarch, the son of the father,—authorised the act in obedience to a miracle, inasmuch as, with such conceptions of human rights and human individuality, there was no counter *internal* evidence against the act to counterbalance the miracle in command of it. This explanation makes no difference in the personal character or prophetic rank of Abraham ; and only supposes in him the ideas of the age in which he lived, of the political order ; such as affect the independent rights and situation of the individual man. It only does not suppose in Abraham a modern estimate and a modern standard of those rights, such as in the Patriarch of that age would have

been an anachronism. But the hypothesis of the act being a human sacrifice in the ordinary sense, and a copy of the human sacrifices of the Canaanites, misrepresents and libels the Patriarch; degrades him into a follower and disciple of an idolatrous and abandoned race, and attributes to him the contamination of a sympathy with their sanguinary altars, and the folly of having been caught by the snare of a pagan superstition. Such an hypothesis is in the plainest contradiction to his whole life and the whole scope of his trial.

LECTURE IV.

EXTERMINATING WARS.

THE argument of this Lecture is in substance the same as that of the second Lecture, only applied to Divine commands for the destruction of nations and masses of men, instead of to a Divine command for taking away the life of a single person. The exterminating wars of the Israelites also, involving as they did the slaughter of whole populations, men, women, and children, on account of the sin of the nation, involved the principle of punishing one man for the sin of another; they were instances both of punishing infants on account of their fathers' sins, posterity on account of forefathers' sins, and some adults on account of other adults. The command of Moses respecting the Canaanitish nations was, "Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth;"[1] and Joshua strictly fulfilled this order. He smote all the cities "with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining."[2] And the Divine command, through the mouth of Samuel, respecting Amalek was, "Slay both man and woman, *infant and suckling*, ox and sheep, camel and ass."[3] The judicial destruction of whole families was a smaller instance of the same principle. Such acts

[1] Deut. 22. 16. [2] Josh. x. 39. [3] 1 Sam. xv. 3.

done in obedience to a Divine command are strongly urged by unbelievers as objections against Old Testament morality. It is replied that God is the author of life and death, and that He has the right at any time to deprive any number of His creatures of life, whether by the natural instrumentality of pestilence or famine, or by the express employment of man as his instrument of destruction. And this as an abstract defence is unquestionably true; nor can it be denied that as soon as a Divine command to exterminate a whole people becomes known to another people, they have not only the right, but are under the strictest obligation to execute such a command.

But there is this great distinction between God destroying human lives by natural means, and using man as his executioner of a command for that purpose—viz., that whereas natural means are the unconscious executors of the Divine wish, man as a reasonable being, with understanding and will, is bound, in the first place, to ascertain that it is the Divine wish before he executes it. In what way, then, is a Divine command for the destruction of a whole nation, innocent and guilty alike, made known to the destroying nation? By the evidence of miracles it is replied, and replied with truth; but some distinction is still wanted in dealing with this subject. For in the present day would a miracle be sufficient authority to us to do acts such as those which *were* done upon the true authority of miracles under the older dispensation? Would miracles be a warrant to us *now* to destroy a whole nation, putting to death men, women, and

children; or to deprive a whole family of life on account of some sinful act committed by the father? It will be acknowledged that they would not be; we should feel it impossible that God would really command us to do such acts as these now, whatever commands He may have given in former ages; and we should put aside the authority of such miracles, as designed, even if they were real, to test our faith, not to make us do the acts in question. For a miracle is not represented in Scripture as absolute evidence of a command from God; rather it is expressly represented as *not* being. As evidence it lies under checks and conditions, in the absence of the fulfilment of which it is not evidence, but trial. And in this light, in which it is thus directly contemplated in the Bible, we should regard a miracle now, which professed to be the warrant of a Divine command to perform acts of indiscriminating punishment, and wholesale slaughter of the innocent and guilty alike.

But if miraculous evidence was properly proof to the Israelites of a Divine command to exterminate certain nations, but would not be sufficient proof of such a command to us now, that must be occasioned by some difference of conceptions in a former age and in the present, in consequence of which such a command was adapted for proof by miracles in a former age, and is not adapted for that proof now; was not an incongruous or incredible command to the people to whom it was given, but would be to *us*.

One explanation, then, that will be given of this difference will be that the Gospel law is a law of love,

and that acts of vengeance and destruction which were appropriate in retribution of sin in a less advanced age, and were the natural expression of hostility to evil in that age, are wholly out of place under a dispensation which enjoins as its leading precepts charity and resignation, and, instead of resisting evil, the bearing all things and the enduring all things. When a Samaritan village would not receive our Lord, His disciples, James and John, when they saw this, said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" That was the spirit of the old law. But our Lord replied that they were now to be of another spirit. "He turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."[1]

But though this is a most important distinction in the standard of Judaism and of Christianity, it is not the whole of the distinction between them; for we plainly see that the acts to which we refer,—the destruction of whole nations, children included, for the sins of the adult portion, and the infliction of death upon whole families for the personal sins of their heads,—are not only contrary to the law of love, but contrary also to our idea of justice. When we compare the Gospel era with the condition of the human mind antecedent to it, we find that there has been not only a revelation of the principle of love, but that there has been also a revelation of the idea of justice too;

[1] Luke ix. 54, 55, 56.

that that idea has been developed, sharpened, and defined in the human mind; so that the idea of justice would be now an absolute bar to the execution of certain proceedings, against which it did not act as such an absolute barrier in a former age of the world.

The defective sense of justice, then, in those early ages, arose from the defective sense of individuality. The idea of justice could not be complete or exact before the idea of *man* was, for justice implies a proper estimate of the being *about* whom it relates, and with whom it deals. But the idea of man, the conception of human individuality, that each man is an independent being in himself, was only imperfectly embraced in those ages. Man was regarded as an appendage to man, to some person or some body, and therefore the idea of man being defective, the idea of justice was defective too. Hence arose, then, those monstrous forms of civil justice in the East, in which the wife and the children were included in the same punishment with the criminal himself, as being *part* of him. The idea was not always acted upon, nor did it form part, as far as one can judge, of the common routine of justice; indeed it would have caused the depopulation of countries if it had; but it was always at hand to be brought into use if wanted. The punishment of children for the sins of the fathers was, we may say, incorporated into the civil justice of the East, and was part of its traditional civil code: it was not an every-day process in the courts, but the principle of it existed in the law, and was resorted to on special occasions, when a great impression had to be made. Not that

the offences which were selected for the examples of this mode of retribution were chosen upon any principle, for they seem to have followed the caprice of the monarch. But they were such as, according to this irregular standard, were heinous crimes; and the application of this extreme penalty seems to have carried the authority and weight of law, and to have been recognised by custom and popular opinion, and not to have been a simply arbitrary and tyrannical act of the monarch. Such was the character of Nebuchadnezzar's sentence upon all the blasphemers of the true God, to whom he had, after the miraculous salvation of the three servants of God, pronounced his adhesion; the sentence, viz., that all such persons should "be cut in pieces, and their houses made a dunghill;"[1] *i.e.*, that their families should perish with them. Nor, when Darius punished the malignant accusers of Daniel with the very death intended for the accused, and included their wives and children in it, does he appear to have done anything more than what the Oriental code of justice fully sanctioned. It was the sentence of a monarch who especially respected law and legal tradition, and did not make his own will his rule; a monarch who had evidently a strong sense of justice in his nature, a sympathy with the oppressed and ill used, a respect for holy men, a pious and devout temper. Nor are these two cases evidently more than samples of a general and established method of punishment, though it was not an ordinary but an extraordinary act of civil justice, regarded perhaps somewhat

[1] Daniel iii. 29.

in the same light in which our forefathers regarded attainder.

These were the fruits of the idea that one man belonged to another, was part of another. The human appurtenances of the man were nobodies in themselves, they had no individual existence of their own, *their* punishment was a shadow as it affected *them*, because their own nonentity neutralised it; the *person* punished was the hateful criminal himself, who was destroyed *in* his children. The guarantee was given in this extended form of justice that no part of him escaped. Justice got the *whole* of him. The victim in himself, and in all his members, was crushed and extinguished. In the age's blindness and confusion of ideas, people did not really seem to know where the exact personality of the criminal *was*, and where it was to be got hold of; whether, in the locality of himself, was himself only, or some other person or persons also as well. They could not hit the exact mark to their own satisfaction, so they got into their grasp both the man himself and every one connected with him, to make sure. If they did this, if they collected about the criminal everything that belonged to him—wives, children, grandchildren, dependants, servants, household, the whole growth of human life about him, and destroyed it all, they were certain that they punished *him*, and the whole of him. The total of the individual was there, and justice was consummated.

But, again, this defective idea of human individuality had another result besides that which affected the personality of man; it had an effect upon the sense

of justice itself, as a feeling of nature; it let loose exaggerated and extravagantly developed justice as a passion, an affection, and an emotion of the mind.

We are accustomed to represent Justice as neutral and impartial, holding the scales. It is so in the department of evidence, because a criminal is not a criminal till he is proved to be one. But guilt once proved, and standing in its own colours before us, justice takes a *side;* she is a partisan and a foe; she becomes retributive justice, and *desires* the punishment of guilt. Justice then becomes an appetite and a passion, and not a discriminating principle only. We see this in the natural and eager interest which the crowd takes in the solemn proceedings of our courts,—in the relish with which they contemplate the judge in his chair of state; confiding in him as the guardian of innocence and avenger of guilt; and the satisfaction with which the final sentence upon crime is received, resembles the satisfaction of some bodily want —hunger, or thirst, or desire for repose. The hold which religion has upon mankind is due in large measure to the *justice* of religion. She promises one day to fulfil the vision, and realise the dream in every simple mind, of a general setting to rights, when everybody will have his due. It is evident that justice is a craving of our nature, and rests in the punishment of the guilty as an end desirable in itself. It is appeased when it attains this object, and feels a tormenting void when it fails of it.

But justice, as an *appetite and a passion*, is subject to the same extravagances and excesses to which

passion *in general* is subject. There is in all passion an innate tendency to the unreasonable, which breaks out under peculiar excitements. Even what we call sentiment has elements of *un*reason in its way of fastening upon things ;—habits, which are reasonable indeed so far as they are human, but on the other hand cannot be reconciled with pure reason. What, *e.g.*, is the whole internal influence of *association* but a kind of unreasonableness ? We are more than usually affected by a particular event on the recurring day of the year. But why ? What has happened ? The earth has rolled so many times upon its axis. And what has that to do with the event ? Nothing. We visit the *place* where some great man was born, or died, or where he did some notable act. Here Cæsar landed, here Hannibal fought, here Becket died, here Charles V. retired, here Shakespeare was born. But what has *place* to do with the significance of the act or the suffering, the birth or the death ? Nothing. A man must be born somewhere, and die somewhere, and act in some place or other. These are accidents which do not touch the substance of these events. Are we any nearer the person or his act because we stand on the spot where he did it ? No : the person and the place are divided by an infinite interval from each other ; yet we treasure these local connections, and feel ourselves placed in a kind of vicinity to an historical personage by entering the house where he was born.

If quiet sentiment or *feeling* then has constitutional elements of *un*reason in it, what must be the case with strong passion ? It is a known characteristic

of passion that it *makes* objects for itself; that when natural objects are not at hand on which to expend itself, it vents itself upon others which it creates for the occasion. This is a well-known effect in the case of anger; a passionate man, when something has vexed him, stamps upon the ground, or tears the note which contains the bad news into shreds, or kicks away a stone at his feet, as if he would hurt something or other, even in semblance; anything does for an object. "The soul being agitated and discomposed," says Montaigne, "is lost in itself if it has not something to encounter, and therefore always requires an object to aim at and keep it employed. The soul in the exercise of its passions rather deceives itself by creating a false and fantastical subject, even contrary to its own belief, than not to have something to work upon. After this manner brute beasts spend their fury upon the stone or weapon that has hurt them, and are ready to tear *themselves* to pieces for the injury they have received from another. What causes of the misfortunes that befall us do we not ourselves invent? The hair which you tear off by handfuls, and that bosom which you smite with so much indignation and cruelty, are no way guilty of the unlucky stroke which has killed your dear brother: quarrel with something else. Livy, speaking of the Roman army in Spain, says that for the loss of two brothers, the great captains *Flere omnes repente, et offensare capita;* all wept and beat their foreheads: but this is a common practice. And the philosopher Bion said pleasantly of the king who plucked off the hair of his

head for sorrow, 'Does this man think that baldness is a remedy for grief?' Who has not seen gamesters bite and gnaw their cards, and swallow the dice, in revenge for the loss of their money? Xerxes lashed the sea, and wrote a challenge to Mount Athos! Cyrus set a whole army several days at work to revenge himself on the river Gnidus for the fright it had put him in when he was passing over it; and Caligula demolished a very beautiful palace, for the confinement his mother had there."[1]

We see this spirit exhibited in the funereal ceremonies of ancient times, and the tributes paid to the memory of the dead. These became in time indeed formalities and grand shows, matters of family or regal pride rather than the heart, yet they had their origin in real feeling. One can imagine indeed how an imperious will that had never yet been thwarted, and ruled its own world with an absolute sway, would feel upon the sudden loss of a beloved favourite—wife, sister, or friend,—that had been all in all to it; when for the first time it encountered an impassable barrier, and longed for the irrecoverable. This sense of void in the sufferer's mind must be relieved in some way: he cannot acquiesce in impotence, he must struggle; he must reach forward somewhere to supply the room of what is gone; he must do something in order to hide from himself that he can do nothing. He vents himself then in a vast expenditure of barbarous and irrelevant action; he sacrifices attendants

[1] Montaigne's *Essays*—"How the soul discharges itself on false objects," etc., etc.

and followers at the funeral pile; others are unworthy of life when the loved one has departed; and life is the most valuable thing, and therefore a fit treasure to throw away, and send, as it were, *after* the dead. Such a death is to him many deaths; it ought to *cause* other deaths; it ought not to be single and stand alone. He encloses one death then in a thousand; he loads the earth with some gigantic sepulchral fabric to express the largeness of his loss. He thus grasps with outstretched hand after some object to fill the vacuum within; he beats the air, and his baulked desire goes off into an immense waste of energy, which pleases him because it is waste; it is expressive on that very account; his grief indulges in all useless things, in vast margins, in excesses, in superfluities, and costly emptiness.

Love, grief, and passion, in general being thus liable to excesses, justice, as an appetite and passion, is liable to the same. It tends under excitement to *make* objects for itself. And so Oriental justice did. It went out into margins, excesses, superfluous surplusses of retribution; other lives went to this appetite over or above that of the criminal, and justice used human beings as a material of expression, as one would employ a look, a gesture, a motion; it killed a thousand men merely as a mode of tearing the hair, and beating the breast. It refused to be curtailed and checked, or to stop with the criminal himself; it went into a crowd of extras and appendages. It was this ancient notion of justice that came out on great occasions; it was then poor work to punish only one

man; this grand appetite must have more food, more material; there was something excessive in the very nature of justice, which passed beyond the person of the criminal and claimed all his family and house; it was essentially an overflowing thing, refusing to be fixed by the boundary of its immediate object, and pressing onwards by its own force and intensity to others beyond. Connection by blood with the guilty agent was enough to reflect his crime; the passion was too hotly engaged in the pursuit to distinguish the nature of the association, and retribution became extermination. Wild justice thus, like an overwrought passion, *made* objects for itself. Had a designing set of courtiers conspired foully against Daniel? Let no member of the guilty men escape; throw them and their wives and children to the lions. Has wicked Haman plotted the massacre of the Jews? It is not enough that Haman himself should hang on a gallows fifty cubits high; let his ten sons hang with him. Justice was anger, and gave itself all the liberties and privileges of the angry man; the angry man of the stage, whose idea is that his passion to be real and honest, thorough and true, *should* blunder, *should* make mistakes, and hit the wrong man.

Aristotle discusses the passion of anger with his own characteristic shrewdness and acuteness, and with as much of the humorist as of the philosopher. He is indulgent to its mistakes, and tender to its excesses, treating the affection somewhat as a comic writer would treat the character of an honest quick-tempered man in a play. Anger with him is the man in the

farce, who is always making blunders, and mistaking one thing for another, but in a way which provokes a smile rather than indignation. The affection has in his view an intrinsic proneness to misunderstanding and misconception, which he pardons, though the instances which he gives are those which we would not so easily condone. "The intemperance of anger," he says, "is not so bad as that of the appetites; for anger appears to hear reason, but to mistake it, like a too quick servant, who, before he has heard out what is said, runs off, and then makes a mistake in his errand; or as a dog barks at a knock before he knows whether it is a friend's. So anger, in consequence of the heat and quickness of its nature, hearing but not hearing what is said, goes off to revenge itself; for anger *reasons* that this being an insult or a slight, it must punish the man; whereas appetite rushes by mere *instinct* to enjoyment. So that anger follows reason in a way, whereas appetite does not; the one is in a sort of way conquered by reason, the other by its own lust. And, moreover, anger is more constitutional than lust, as one thought who apologised for striking his father; for, says he, this man struck *his* father, and he *his*, and this boy here—pointing to him, will strike me when he is grown up; for it is our nature—συγγενὲς γὰρ ἡμῖν: and one who was dragged by his son up to the door of the house, bid him stop there; for that he himself had dragged his father so far, but not farther."[1] If we extricate the philosophy of this passage from the humour of it, we obtain a truth which

[1] Ethics, l. vii. c. 6.

bears upon the present subject. Aristotle looks upon anger as following an apparent law of reason in its errors and excesses, which seems to itself only its necessary action. Justice, also, as being anger at crime, puts its excesses in the same reasonable point of view to itself; it follows the temper of the general passion of anger. Justice simply acting as a passion goes beyond its mark, carries punishment beyond the guilty person, hits right and left, and brings in a crowd that had nothing to do with the crime, under the scope of the sentence; justice simply as anger votes blood to be crime, and implicates a whole family in the act of its head; it becomes a systematic blunderer and mistake-maker, making out one man to be another, and all upon a kind of plan and a show of reason to itself, by which it determines that blood composes a sort of identity, and makes a family one person: an idea which has as its immediate fruit wholesale judicial slaughter.

But what enabled Oriental justice to run out into these extravagances as an appetite and passion, was the defective sense, to begin with, of human individuality. If you have the perfect idea of human individuality—that every man stands on his own footing, and is a separate person from anybody else, justice may be a strong passion and enthusiasm, it may *desire* all these margins, but it cannot have them; it is under checks and conditions; it cannot make objects for itself, but must take those which are made for it; it cannot pass beyond the real criminal. It cannot slaughter a multitude of people merely as a

grand piece of extravagance, a substitution for oratory, a broad margin and surplus of emotion, and a mode of tearing the hair and beating the breast. If, therefore, justice as a passion did go out into these excesses, it was because the accurate idea of human individuality was then wanting; because the idea of man was not truly understood. That extravagant and monstrous form of civil justice, then—the inclusion of the children in the punishment of the father—was occasioned by this defective idea, coupled with the circumstance that the defect gave scope for the excesses of justice, regarded as an appetite and passion of our nature. The spirit which produced this wild justice was not a wicked, a murderous, or a cruel spirit; it was not delight in the infliction of pain; it was not objectless love of destruction; it was the undisciplined passion of justice working without the perception of the limit which man's individuality imposed upon it. It aimed loosely and confusedly at a high, a good, and a necessary object—the punishment of crime.

This idea of justice, then, which penetrated the ancient and especially the Oriental mind, was evidently also the idea of the Israelitish people in its earlier history. What reason, indeed, is there why the Jewish nation upon such a point, not connected with the peculiar object of their revelation, should not partake of the defective notions of the rest of the world at that time; why the defective idea of human individuality, and the judicial standard which sprang from that root, should not extend to the minds of the sacred people; producing exterminating wars and

wholesale judicial punishments? When the Divine command was given to destroy a whole nation, on account of the wickedness of the great mass in it, and a whole family on account of the sin of the head, these were in fact judicial proceedings natural to the Jewish mind, and in accordance with a received standard of justice. Justice, by means of this release from the idea of individuality and man's rights, was set at liberty to act as a passion; to punish wholesale, to slaughter whole nations for the sins of many of the nation, to extirpate and destroy, upon the mere ground of connection by blood. The idolatries and abominations of the Canaanites invited vengeance, and vengeance did not confine itself to accurate justice; it expanded into the extravagances of the unchecked passion of justice, moral in its hatred of evil, but without clearness, and blind and dim in its notion of persons.

But there is this great distinction between the principle of punishment for the father's sins as it was held by the Jewish people, and the same principle as it was held in the pagan and general Oriental world—viz., that in the latter the judicial principle figures as a part of civil law, coming into operation whenever a sufficiently important occasion arises. The Persian monarch flings the families of the false accusers into the lions' den, along with the criminals themselves, as a judicial act of his own, and belonging of right to a regal tribunal of justice. But in Israel the principle did not exist as a part of regular law, but only as a special and extraordinary supplement to law, when God

himself commandedit. The Jewish law forbade magistrates to punish the children for the fathers' sins. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin."[1] The punishment, then, of the family for the sin of the head was among the Jews extra-legal, and stood upon a religious ground as the dictation of a special revelation. But though the Jewish mind was in a higher state than the ordinary Eastern mind on this subject, as the very fact of confining this species of justice to Divine command, and excluding it from a human court and ordinary law, shows, this retributive principle had still a place in the Jewish mind as an extraordinary mode of justice, which a special command might rouse from a dormant state into action in a particular case. It had a suspended operation, checked by a peculiar religious condition. It met the Divine command halfway, no prepossession being felt against such a shape of justice as an extraordinary one; and it had a constant incipient action in the system, though it was powerless unless it was taken up by a special revelation of the Divine will. Such was the divided and modified hold of this ruder form of justice upon the Jewish mind; not so strong as its hold upon the Eastern world generally, in which that form of justice was a part of regular law, but still enough so to give such justice a popular naturalness, and remove all unfittingness when there was external evidence of a Divine command to execute it; and when it came

[1] Deut. xxiv. 16.

before them as a grand and majestic act of Him who ordereth all things according to His own sovereign will.

And this supplies an answer to a question which is asked with respect to the need of miraculous interposition for the sanction of this extraordinary species of justice. It is said that in ages in which this was the state of ideas, that is to say, when one man was in the mind of the age an appendage of another, and was identified with a parent or ruler in crime, it followed by natural reason that he should be identified with him in punishment; and that one of these extraordinary cases would be wholesale family, and the other wholesale national destruction. What need, therefore, to the Jews, it is asked, of any special Divine command, and with it of miraculous evidence, to warrant such acts, when this idea of justice existed to begin with in their minds as a natural idea? What impediment was there to their acting upon this idea, without waiting for the special authorisation? Why require the sanction of a miracle for these acts, if the popularly received idea of justice of itself allowed and sanctioned them? But an idea may be held, and yet, with reference to such a question as this, everything may depend upon the *mode and measure* in which it is held. Among the Jews what was that mode and measure? That is simply an historical question. As a matter of fact, in the Jewish mind this peculiar principle of justice existed in a modified and limited form; ready to be put in execution upon a special Divine call, but not before. We have not to examine the state of mind logically, but to take the fact. As a matter of fact it was a

special authorisation which put in force this justice in the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, the family of Achan, the family of Saul, as well as in the larger case of the extermination of the Canaanites: an authorisation through a miracle at the time, or through an inspired leader. The principle, held indefinitely elsewhere in the early ages of the world, was held with this distinction by the Jew. But such a Divine sanction implied miraculous evidence to support it. And thus it was an essential characteristic of this extraordinary justice under the old dispensation, that it was executed under such miraculous warrant; this was a fundamental feature of it, which entered into the system, and furnished a moral condition of it.

But with whatever condition this idea of justice was held in the Jewish mind, when we have the fact that it was held, we have the reason why the Divine commands, of which we have been speaking, were adapted to man as the agent for their execution then, and are not adapted now; and were capable of proof by the evidence of miracles then, and are not capable now;—viz., that the imperfect idea of justice which then existed in the human mind opposed no resistance to them on the moral side. Suppose a Divine command, professing to come to us now upon the evidence of a miracle, that we were to kill one man on account of the crime of another man, a family of children on account of the sin of their father, all the infants of a nation on account of the wickedness of a nation as a whole; it is plain that, in the first place, we should

be divided in our minds between two contradictory evidences,—the evidence of the miracle that such a command came from God, and the evidence of our sense of justice that it could not. And is it not also sufficiently plain, in the next place, that according to the Bible's own test of the validity of miraculous evidence, such evidence could not be valid proof of a command having come from God when in opposition to our moral sense? But then these commands had no resistance from the moral sense; they did not look unnatural to the ancient Jew, they were not foreign to his standard; they excited no surprise or perplexity; they appealed to a genuine but rough idea of justice, which existed when the longing for retribution upon crime in the human mind was not checked by the strict sense of human individuality. Such commands were therefore adapted then to miraculous proof; because such proof, then meeting nothing counter to it in the human conscience, possessed its natural weight not counterbalanced or neutralised. Man in the first ages was identified with some individual or body external to him, was implicated in its crimes, and exposed to their punishment; whereas now human individuality is understood, and society is penetrated with the true conception of each man as an independent being, with an existence and rights of his own.

LECTURE V.

VISITATION OF THE SINS OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN.

WHEN in a later age we have to separate one part of the Jewish Law from another, the permanent part from the temporary part, the accommodation to imperfect morality from the moral truths; we have to argue and to lay down some position on the subject which includes the consequence we want. But in the actual dispensation of the law; and when one part *was* separating from another by an actual change and development, no argument was needed on the subject. The Law naturally and of itself slipped off its incongruous matter; all that was not perfectly holy, pure, and righteous, did not, *ipso facto*, belong to the Law, it was rejected as something that came from another stock; and if it had been confounded hitherto with the Law, it was time that the partition should be made, and the difference of the two materials revealed. Our Lord, *e.g.*, was not prevented by His Divine nature from arguing and showing forth truth by a logical process; as when He argued for the resurrection of the dead from that which was spoken by God—saying, "I

am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: God is not the God of the dead but of the living."[1] But in the Sermon on the Mount, which is the great trial of the Law,—the examination which tests the purity of its different precepts and rules,—there is no argument; but the alien parts drop off of themselves, and leave the residuum pure. The Law tests itself. Does the enlightened conscience condemn anything it allows or commands? By the simple condemnation of conscience it ceases to belong to the Law: it goes. "Ye have heard that it hath been said of old time." All these precepts were the *litera scripta* of the Law; they are there in black and white; statute law, as good as ever was impressed on any code. But it all goes, from the original assumption which overrules every particular statute, that now nothing but what is perfect is allowed in morals. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." If there is anything which is a falling short, which goes a certain way but not the whole way—as in the imperfect law of marriage, in the imperfect law of love, in a law of retaliation—it is assumed that the *essence* of the Law is *not* all this, and that, on the other hand, what is perfect *is* the Law. We know nothing henceforth but this perfect Law commanding in the conscience.

So of St. Paul. It is remarkable that with all the imperfections, the crudities, the coarse legislation which is stamped upon the Law, the Law never figures in St. Paul's moral estimate except as perfect. "The

[1] Matt. xxii. 32.

Law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good."[1] How is this? except that *ipso facto* the Law parts with everything that is imperfect. Nothing that is not holy can be part of the Law. It is an axiom which settles everything. We hear nothing now of the exceptions taken in the Sermon on the Mount against the fallings short, defects, and inequalities of the Mosaic legislation; but that is because these have already been eliminated; and because, on that very account, the pure residuum is constituted the Law, and everything that is imperfect has *ipso facto* dropped off from it. The Law, then, which is recognised by St. Paul is the perfect law only. He knows of nothing else. An imperfect law is an absurdity. The Law entered that offence might abound; not to let men off, and show that they were not sinners because they had a very easy rule given them. It was absolutely necessary, then, that the Law must be pure and perfect. But how was such a law got, but by the old Law casting its skin, and coming out in a new and perfect character as the Law of God, aspiring to the full spiritual morality? It is to be observed that the only dispute which engages attention in St. Paul is no dispute respecting the morality of the Law,—as if it was doubted whether that morality were quite correct, and were not clouded by mistakes and lowered by blemishes and blots,—but it is a question only whether that Law can be fulfilled, whether the human conscience is able to satisfy it. The moral demands of the Law are insatiable, we cannot mount up to this height, Alps on

[1] Romans vii. 12.

Alps arise, and we are involved in an inextricable labyrinth wherever we turn; duties and obligations beset us with impossible claims, which cannot be resisted, and yet cannot be cleared. This is the difficulty, then, in the doctrinal scheme of St. Paul; but he does not think that the Law has blotches and stains; there is no apprehension in St. Paul's mind that the Law is not good enough: the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal; for the good that I would I do not, but the evil that I would not that I do; the Law is perfect, but we do not fulfil it. The mistake St. Paul fights against is not obedience to a carnal law so full of gross imperfections; but that of assuming that we do and can obey a law so essentially insatiable in its moral claims, and which exceeds and baffles the conscience;—that we can obey a law so spiritual.

We have then here the quick and summary process by which, in the actual emergency, the Law clears itself—viz., by casting out spontaneously the objectionable matter, and taking the high ground that whatever is not self-evidently holy and good does not belong to the Law. We frame long arguments to defend the Law of God from the injustice of punishing children for the sins of their fathers, but if we believe the Sermon on the Mount it is all done with one word—viz. that punishing children for the fathers' sake cannot belong to the Law of God, because it is unjust. The Law of God vindicates itself, and its defence is self-acting. Thus the argument is the simplest possible, and its effect is complete. The Law comes to us, in the first instance, under the most heinous charges;

that it enjoins hatred, retaliation, infringements of the marriage law, and the like; but all these drop off from it in a moment upon the principle of the Sermon on the Mount. The instant that it is perceived that these are wrong things, these things are seen not to be in the Law. The true law of God disowns them; they are only in it because of the hardness of men's hearts; *i.e.*, they are there because they are in the human heart; the true site of the evil is in man. And so the punishment of one man for the sin of another is, *ipso facto*, rejected by the law of justice. Retaliation is also rejected by the law of love. Both are therefore, *ipso facto*, cast out of the law of God. This is—all of it—a spontaneous operation; it is a self-acting vindication. The Law of God clears itself by one act; and from being a law charged with gross injustice and pollution, stands forth in the light of a perfect law. The Law is holy; and the commandment is holy, and just, and good. This is the answer that St. Paul gives to the charge that the Law has commanded wrong practices, and placed itself in the wrong; the answer that it has not done so because it is the Law of God.

What the Deity admits into his Law externally, because the hardness of men's hearts obliges it, and what He admits into it because it is His will, are things absolutely different. Commands are not of Divine obligation simply because they are externally commands: we, *e.g.*, see commands in Scripture which plainly disclaim the Divine source. Thus the command to Balaam: which is plainly to say—As you want to go, go; I will not prevent you from taking

the course you are bent upon; you have set your mind upon going with the princes; take your own way. So the command of our Lord to Judas:—That thou doest do quickly. He was commanded *now* to do the act, but it was his own act which he was commanded to do. There is a class of commands which, in human transactions, come under the head of irony, and signify—Now you have been so long a time wanting to do this, and applying the force of your own will to the attainment of this purpose,—now then I will join you, I will add my will to yours. I tell you to do it. Do it, and take the consequences of it. The command is half command and half threat. Had the recipients of it the slightest idea of the danger which really resides in such an order, they would dread it more than the strongest and most forcible resistance; but instead of this they catch at it, value it as if it were just the very liberty that they have longed for; and swallow the destructive, and justly destructive, permission. The Scripture principle thus was laid down that God commanded according to the state of mind of the person; commanded even wickedness ironically, when the state of a man's mind was wicked and obstinate in sin. Is he determined on a covetous self-aggrandising career? bid him go with the princes of Moab. Is he eager for the reward of blood? tell him to get it quickly. Does he want to be hardened as Pharaoh did? harden him.

But a distinction must be drawn between this class of commands given in judicial anger,—commands to do wicked and corrupt acts,—and commands to do acts of rude goodness consonant to

the imperfect morality of the times. Such commands as these are not given in anger, but only in condescension to the weakness and ignorance of man, who cannot rise all at once to the high moral standard. But such commands to do imperfect moral acts have still to be explained, when, in a later age and with the holiness and justice of the Divine Law fully developed, the rough incipient stages of the Divine dealings with man come into discussion, and are scrutinised from a lofty moral standard. It is this that constitutes the great subject of Scripture criticism, and upon which the apologetics of Scripture itself centre. The apologetics of the Sermon on the Mount, and the apologetics of St. Paul's Epistles, relate to the defective element in Scripture, and lay down, with respect to it, that the Law of God is clear from the responsibility of it, because the Law of God never did enjoin it; *i.e.*, what was really the Law of God. The real Law of God was all good: the evil was the condition of the human mind. The human mind only admitted good to a certain extent. It was faulty in the measure of that admission of good, but the good itself was not the worse; and the Law of God itself was cleared.

We see then that the imperfect parts of the Law slipped off naturally from the old stock, as the Law entered into an age of higher morals; the parts relating to marriage, divorce, enmity, retaliation, had been identified with the Law in the earlier ages, but conscience rejected them as conscience advanced; and when conscience rejected them, the Law also itself cast

them off. And this was especially the case in the instance of the law of punishment of children for the sins of the fathers, laid down in the Second Commandment. The Second Commandment was explained in such a way as that the punishment of children for the sins of the fathers was wholly relieved from the literal sense of punishment, and became the infliction of evil and pain for another reason than that of punishment. And this change was by a natural transition in the ideas of the age. The Law threw off its old Mosaic character. The idea, *i.e.*, of children being guilty of their fathers' sins was rejected, and consequently of punishment implying in its true sense guilt. With the idea of guilt that of punishment was also dropped; and this idea in the Second Commandment, understood in its first and natural sense, left the Gospel code by an inevitable separation,—in virtue of the perfection of the Gospel not being able to bear with it.

But it will be well to explain the mode in which one interpretation of the Second Commandment has slid into another, and to elucidate the change which has come over it more fully and accurately.

I have been discussing throughout these Lectures the *Old Testament* fact of the Divine punishment of children for the sins of their fathers; and I have treated the fact as an accommodation to a rude and barbarous, but in its foundation *moral*, sense of justice of the day. But now the question may be asked—Do we not admit a law of God's natural providence as going on now, and as being part of the moral government of the world, which we call Visiting the sins of

the fathers upon the children? and admit it not only as a law accommodated to a moral standard of an earlier time, but as of force now and always in the world? Undoubtedly we do. But this law of Providence is not to be confounded, as a line of Divine action, with the extraordinary modes of proceeding to which we have been referring. When we speak of the punishment of children for the sins of the fathers, as a law of Providence now going on in the world, we give a judicial name to a course of proceeding which is not in reality judicial; we employ a phrase for convenience sake, not intending it to be understood literally, as if the children incurred the guilt of the fathers' sin, and were punished judicially for it. The infliction of evil is not in itself punishment; it is only punishment when it is inflicted upon men *on account of sin*. The destructions of which we have been speaking *were* judicial, because they were expressly inflicted on account of sin; those who would not otherwise have died were put to death for sin—that of another person; the sin of another person was the declared and published reason for the infliction of death upon them. But the link which connects the sin of the father with the injured condition of the children under the law of providence, is not a judicial but a *physical* one. The one is the *occasion* of the other; but the child is not made to suffer by the Author of nature upon the ground that his father was a bad man, and that justice requires the punishment of the son for that fact. The tie which unites the wickedness of the one with the suffering of the other, is the tie of material cause and

effect. The law of natural providence, then, which we call the visitation of the sins of the fathers upon the children requires no moral defence, because it is not a judicial but only a physical process; the children are not *punished* on account of their fathers' sins, but only suffer, through the physical medium of those sins, that temporal loss which God has a right to inflict upon them through any other medium, without any crimes of their fathers at all. But the case is different when, from the course of God's natural providence, we turn to those cases in the Old Testament in which the express force, scope, and reason of judicial punishment is given for the destruction of whole families; in which that destruction does not take place through the physical medium of those crimes, but by a positive sentence of God, inflicted by reason of and upon the ground of the fathers' sin. Nor are the instances adduced of visitation of the fathers' sins upon the children under the law of natural providence, precedents to justify real vicarious punishments, as those instances in Scripture are. The two are not parallel cases; a natural cause is no precedent for a moral one, a sequence of nature is no parallel for a penalty of justice. Nor, when we examine the meaning in which the phrase—the punishment of the children for the sins of their fathers—is used in poetry, in literature, in conversation, when allusion is made to this law of providence, do we find that the popular meaning and acceptation of the phrase implies anything judicial. Nobody means to say that the children are guilty of the sins of their fathers, and therefore

punished for them, which alone would be a judicial infliction. The phrase is used in a liberal sense, viz., that the sins of the fathers are the occasion of misfortune to the children; not in the literal sense that misfortune is *merited* by the children on account of those sins.

Let us take the cases which are appealed to as illustrations of this law; they are such as the following. A man by a course of sensual dissipation ruins his bodily health, and transmits a feeble and sickly constitution to his children. A man by a course of reckless extravagance crumbles away his estate, and bequeaths poverty and straitened circumstances to his children. A man by a course of criminal acts, which not only cover him with infamy but perhaps lead eventually to civil punishment and even to capital punishment, transmits a degraded name to his children. A man, from simple carelessness, indolence, and selfish absorption in his own pleasures, neglects the education of his children, and thus transmits the signal misfortune of ignorance, and often, what is worse than ignorance, a low and coarse standard of morals to his children. But is there anything in the literal sense judicial, in the mode in which the sin and the inherited punishment are connected together in these cases? That is to say, are the children in any of these cases punished as *deserving* such punishment *because* their father was a bad man? That is not the idea entertained. The connection between the father's sin and the children's punishment is not a moral connection in any of these cases, nor one imply-

ing moral responsibility; it is a simply *physical* link which unites the wickedness of the one with the suffering of the other. The case is that the father by his vices produces a certain material condition of affairs, and that condition of affairs existing, the children have the disadvantage of it. If the father have squandered his estate, the children do not inherit it; the tie which unites these two facts together is the tie of cause and effect simply, not the tie of a providential justice inflicting the loss upon the children because they *deserve* it. Every event has a cause, and the misfortunes which happen to us are all caused by something. The cause of our poverty may be either a father's profusion or a neighbour's fraud, and the cause of our bad health may be either an unfortunate accident or an inherited disease; we no more *merit* the inherited disease than we do the accident, or the inherited poverty than the fraudulently caused one.

But when the visitation of the sins of the fathers upon the children is interpreted in the sense of Old Testament history, we see that it is *not* in the sense in which the phrase is used when it figures as a law of natural providence, and when it is employed in the cases which have been just referred to. We see that *there*,—*i.e.*, when it applies to the execution of the extraordinary sentences in the Old Testament,—it is not by a mere physical medium that the punishment is inflicted, but by a distinctly judicial medium. A crime was committed by Achan, and for the crime which Achan committed the family are punished by death. That is to say, the family are treated as guilty

of the father's sin, and this is the sense in which the punishment of the children for the sins of the fathers is understood and accepted in the instance of Achan's children. Had Achan been smitten with disease, and had all that had taken place with respect to the children been, that they had caught the complaint by infection and died of it, the result could not possibly have been represented as a punishment, except in the sense of an evil which had happened to them through the physical medium of the father's sin. The father's death by disease had been a judicial infliction upon *him* indeed, but the death of the children would have been the *physical* consequence of his death. It would not itself have been a judicial punishment, because it would have taken place just the same if the fatal disease of the father had arisen from any other reason, without any sin to deserve it, and simply as an occurrence of nature. The disease of the father would have been simply the physical cause of the disease of the children, not a moral cause;—not the reason of their deserving the infliction of it as a *punishment*. But the punishment of the children did not take place in this way. It was a fresh judicial act of the Almighty in addition to the act of the punishment of the guilty man. The family, as distinct from the consequence of physical law, were punished upon the ground of their being implicated in his sin, which is a moral ground,—a ground of desert.

But this is a totally different Divine act and Divine mode of procedure from that which takes place under the head of visiting the sins of the fathers in the

course of God's natural providence. The physical medium of suffering by which the same punishment which is morally the punishment of the father is materially, and by way of physical cause and effect, the punishment of the son,—which is real punishment in the first step, and is not real punishment in the next,—this goes on every day, goes on now, and is a received and immediate law of God's natural providence. But that a child should be punished *as* guilty of an implication in the father's crime, is a conception which does not belong to the present age of the world, and which is in complete contradiction to that idea of human individuality which has established itself in the human mind.

But because the law of Providence which we call visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children is not properly judicial, has it no moral purpose? It has a signal one. When we look upon the course of things in this world, the scene before us is at first all haze and confusion, and for a long time we see only an entangled growth and vast chaos of events, telling, some one way, some another, and therefore forming an inexplicable whole, perplexing us with the difficulty of extracting any one lesson, drawing any one law, and anticipating any one issue from it. The mass is full of internal discord and contention, which baffles interpretation. But by and by, as we look steadily and patiently upon this scene of complication, a faint dawn of interpretative light arises; the events point in certain directions, and fall into certain main tracks of design. Laws begin to appear; and though these laws

themselves by no means perfectly harmonise, but in their present operation present an appearance of going different ways; still they extricate the scene from the thick obscurity which lay upon it. First, there is the law that on the whole the dispensation favours the good as regards happiness and satisfaction in life. This is a law which is obscured by many false lights, and many specious counter-facts, but a law which, as our observation deepens, more and more disengages itself from misinterpreting and distracting considerations, and comes clearly out. Another law is the chastisement of the good. Another law is the *didactic* design of the dispensation, that events are so ordered as to furnish striking lessons, and to impress deeply upon us moral and religious truths,—"When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." The course of things in this world is a great teacher, and the experience of life, when events are looked at in their designed light, is a great spiritualiser of the mind. And, among the modes of teaching, one is the sight of the ruinous effect of men's sins upon the condition of their families and posterity. The sin is thus held up to the world with a mark upon it, it is made to fasten on men's eyes, and it is kept up in recollection when otherwise it might be forgotten. Providence, if we may use the expression, cannot afford to dispense with the ordinary weapons of instruction which chain the attention of mankind to the consequences of sin; thus putting the stamp of evil upon it, exhibiting it to the world in a fearful and formidable light, and converting it into a lasting spectacle

of disaster and sadness before men's eyes. That the sins of one generation do issue in pain and loss to another is observed; and it makes, and is designed to make, a certain moral impression upon us. The fact that sin continues in its effects long after the act itself, is didactic, and creates a deep image in men's minds.

We have thus a double aspect of the law of the Second Commandment, according as we take it in the sense of the extraordinary *Old Testament visitations* of the sins of individuals upon families and nations, which we have discussed; or according as we take it in the sense of *the law of God's natural providence*, so called. If we take it in the sense of these extraordinary facts, we understand it then as a law by which God punishes children judicially and as guilty of the father's sins. If we take it in the latter sense of God's natural providence, we do not understand the law as judicial but as didactic. The law of the Second Commandment is promulgated now in our churches as an existing part of the government of God: not as an obsolete part, gone with the ideas of former days, but as a present law, working under the present and Christian dispensation. And we speak of national judgments, and of punishments of whole populations, as existing modes of Divine action and as what take place now. But this is in the sense in which we understand the law when working as a part of God's natural providence; that is to say, in a didactic sense. We do not suppose that the law is judicial, as punishing the good part of these populations judicially for the sins of the bad, and as guilty of

those sins; but only meaning that in these signal calamities the order of nature is made subservient to moral purpose. It is evident, indeed, that the law of the Second Commandment was relieved of its judicial sense even while under the Jewish dispensation and before the close of the Old Testament period. For Ezekiel understood the Second Commandment in a sense different from the judicial punishment of one man for the sins of another, which he expressly denounces as derogatory to Divine justice.[1] The interpretation of an earlier age doubtless did not distinguish the didactic and judicial senses of the law of the Second Commandment, but a clearer light dawned in the page of later prophecy. It was seen that every man must take upon himself his own individual acts and deserts, and that justice required that he should be punished for his own sins only. The idea of the true individuality of man stands out with conspicuous strength in the teaching of Ezekiel. Dim and confused in the first ages, the notion of desert,—partly resting on the individual, partly clogged with the irrelevant associations of blood relationships and neighbourhood,—struck an uncertain ambiguous note in man's conscience. But as the law of Sinai worked in men's minds, it gradually developed the deeper parts of his moral nature; and the individuality of the human being came out in its true form and with its moral consequences. The law of the Second Commandment proves to be a law of God's natural providence, but no judicial law. God, in the

[1] Ezekiel xviii. 2.

Second Commandment, declares that "He visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation;" but we do not understand this as meaning that He visits those sins upon them *as being guilty* of them. We recite this commandment in our churches now, but we take it in a sense which satisfies the terms of it, viz., the physical consequences; which, while they do not prove desert, still answer important didactic purposes. In interpreting this Second Commandment, the instances which divines give as parallel cases to it are not judicial cases of punishment, but instances out of the course of God's natural providence,—cases of mere physical suffering caused by physical laws. "The posterity of a traitor," says Bishop Taylor, "are made beggars and dishonourable, his escutcheon is reversed, his arms of honour are extinguished, the nobleness of his ancestors is forgotten. . . . . While men by the characters of infamy are taught to call that family accursed which had so base a father."[1] (*Note* 3.) "There is no question," says Bishop Sanderson, "*de facto*, but so it is: the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children. . . . As diseases and infirmities of the body, so, commonly the abilities and dispositions and tempers of the mind and affections become hereditary, and, as we say, run in a blood. . . . . But that the children are punished for the fathers' sins, or indefinitely any one man for the sins of any other man, it ought to be imputed to those sins of the fathers or others, not as to the causes properly deserving them, but only as *occasion-*

[1] Sermon on the Entail of Curses cut off.

ing those punishments."[1] Theological writers who defend the law of the Second Commandment thus appeal to an existing course of providence as itself affording instances of such a law; but the instances to which they appeal are not instances of judicial infliction, and do not therefore come up to the justification of the Second Commandment in that sense. The appeal, therefore, to such non-judicial instances in justification of the Second Commandment implies that the Second Commandment is not taken in a judicial sense. The law of visitation of sins in the Second Commandment is regarded as sufficiently fulfilled if God does so connect sin with misery for *any* wise end —any purpose which is instructive, though not implying anything judicial; or that God visits the children in this case as being guilty of the fathers' sins.

Indeed one cannot doubt that the whole class of extraordinary punishments of nations and families for the crimes of individuals, in the Old Testament, which has been discussed in these Lectures, had a *didactic* object in view, as well as a barbarous and eccentric *judicial object.* Those strange and monstrous forms of civil justice which were incorporated in the regular practice of the Eastern courts, and in extraordinary instances in the Jewish, were a sort of actual wild justice; in the first instance designed as a magnifying and expansion of the really guilty person, but beyond this aiming at a rough sort of instruction, at marking certain crimes by way of warning, and terrifying the people from the commission of them. It was a

[1] Third Serm. *ad Populum.*

method of *teaching*, by means of spectacles and scenes of horror, and the multiplication of the disastrous effects of crime. It aimed at producing an overwhelming impression, a stunning blow and shock to subdue the crowd. And, much more than a mere outbreak of civil justice and the monarch's will—often a mere barbarous and capricious outbreak—did the *divinely commanded* scenes of destruction serve a didactic object. They impressed upon the minds of an obdurate people the heinousness of particular sins; they inspired terror, and compelled them to think with awe of the offended majesty of God.

And thus we have a double aspect of that extraordinary class of Divine commands which have been considered in these Lectures, according as we regard them as abnormal and irregular manifestations of justice, or as rough modes of instructing a barbarous people. Both designs were doubtless united in the main basis upon which these anomalous proceedings stood, and in the great motive and idea which originated them. They were rude and extravagant forms of justice, but they had also, like the natural law of visitation of fathers' sins in the course of Divine providence, a didactic design; only the disastrous consequences of these sins upon the families of the offenders were produced by a special Divine command instead of by the course of nature. Didactically it was the same whether the wickedness of a father transmitted a shortened life to the child by a natural law or by a positive command. Either case was an instance of the right of the Almighty to in-

struct by means of terrible events and by the deaths of His creatures. As the destruction of human life upon the largest scale is God's every-day act, without an apparent reason, so it is perfectly consistent that it should be His act *for* a reason, the object, viz., of moral teaching and impression. The extermination of the Canaanites, and the destruction of the families of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, of Achan, and of Saul, were great lessons, and lessons which the great Master could give by the simple exercise of His rights as the Lord of human life.

These two aspects, then, of this extraordinary class of Divine acts give us the temporary and accommodated side of the Divine action, which cannot be defended but as an accommodation to the conceptions of the day; and, that side of the Divine action which is permanent and which is continued now in the ordinary course of Divine providence. The judicial aspect of these Divine acts was temporary and accommodated only, because it was impossible really that God should punish children on account of their fathers' sins, and as being guilty of them, therefore the punishment could not have been, even at the time of this commandment, *in fact* judicial or retributive. But doubtless, among the Israelitish people,—to the popular understanding at the time,—these visitations were judicial acts of the Deity. Our interpretation of these Divine acts would thus differ from the contemporary one; and they are defended now upon a different ground from that upon which they were originally accepted. They were accepted

at the time as judicial by the enthusiastic but rude judicial sense of that time; but to us, who have advanced upon that idea of justice, and in whose eyes the right of the individual is sacred, these acts of God can only be, in their *judicial* light, accommodated acts; *not real acts* expressive of the Divine justice, but only adapted to the popular idea of justice of that day.

They were *real* acts, and expressed the real mind of the Deity, only as acts of instruction. While the judicial side was an accommodation, the didactic ground on which they stood was an actual and a real one, and this has continued to be a visible part of Divine providence. God cannot punish a man for the reason of another's sin; but it is open to God to inflict death upon his creatures, *without* a reason, if it so pleases Him; and of course for a reason, if it be a good one;—in order to strike wholesome terror, in order to keep a standing memento, in order to associate sin with a spectacle of horror and destruction. This is the double aspect of the law of the Second Commandment:—to us a law of didactic providence; but judicial to an earlier age, which really confused individualities, and identified children with their parents. A clearer light began to dawn on the page of later prophecy, and when Ezekiel proclaimed a more perfect idea of the Divine justice, as checked by the inherent limits of human individuality and responsibility, the whole of the judicial interpretation of the Second Commandment became necessarily obsolete.

LECTURE VI.

JAEL.

IN what light would the Israelitish nation present itself to an ardent and enthusiastic mind in one of the neighbouring communities—a mind keenly alive to the horrible atrocities and corruptions of the religion of the old races, and knowing that the Israelitish invader came to displace them, and plant his own stock in their stead? That there had been one such person in this situation,—and that person, like Jael, a woman,—we know; Rahab, "who perished not with them that believed not," because she had "faith," and saw that it was God's will that a pure religion should cast out the false ones, and the holy people supplant the old corrupt nations. In what light then would the Jewish people appear to a mind of this type? In the first place, a whole people worshipping the one invisible God, under no form, but in His own pure essence, would without doubt be, as compared with the surrounding idolatries, an inexpressibly sublime sight. Even one true worshipper in such a situation would be most remarkable; such was Abraham: but a *nation* worshipping the one Universal Spirit would be a marvellous and overwhelming contrast. It would indeed be difficult for us now to form an adequate conception of the way in which the simple absence of

idols in the religion of a nation, amid a whole surrounding world of idolatry, would strike such a mind; the omission would be more speaking than any sign; it would rouse the imagination more than the grandest spectacle. An idol in truth *conceals* the Deity, the absence of it would reveal Him; a wall would be broken down and veil removed which separated man from his Maker:—Who would be first apprehended when He ceased to be seen, and would sit enthroned in His very invisibility when the image was gone. There would be, when the earthly god had disappeared, for the very first time to human thought really a God in heaven. The idol is a deadening thing, it assimilates the worshipper to itself, and converts him into a block of wood or stone; materialises his conceptions; clogs up his sense; but when the idol is gone he is a living man again, and again discerns a God. A whole nation worshipping the true God, and worshipping Him under no material form, would be thus a most awakening spectacle to a person of a deep religious spirit in another community, before whose eyes the sight was brought; arresting the attention, and revealing heaven and earth to him in a light in which he had never before seen them, but similar to that in which they stood in the Psalmist's words:—"Confounded be all they that worship carved images, and that delight in vain gods; *worship Him, all ye gods.*—Clouds and darkness are round about Him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His seat.—O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, let the whole earth stand in awe of Him."

Such a nation, again, would present itself to the mind of a person of this temper almost in the aspect of a nation of priests. The ancient pagan world laboured from first to last under the inveterate prejudice that, whatever enlightenment individuals here and there might attain to, the *mass* must be in the dark, that truth was the privilege of the few, and that error and superstition were the natural inheritance of the vulgar: but here was a whole nation in possession of the most sublime esoteric truth; a nation worshipping in the light of day that one Supreme Being who was only known to the hierophant and the philosopher among the heathen, and was not *worshipped* even when *known*. Such a people, then, would naturally appear to a kindred spirit in another community in the light of a sacred people, a nation of priests, with whom that truth was public property which was with the heathen the secret of the initiated class. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord."[1] "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."[2] The actual history of the Israelites was indeed a great falling short of the model; still this was the creed and worship of the nation. And therefore Balaam had stood gazing on in involuntary ecstasy of admiration and awe upon that nation, and had said, "From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations."[3] Nor even was the creed of the crowd, however fluctuating with the tide of popular caprice and shaken by sudden fancies,

[1] Isaiah liv. 13. [2] xxvi. 2. [3] Numb. xxiii. 9.

a *dead* creed. On the contrary, it inspired the people with courage, it filled them with the certainty of victory, and with the sense of complete superiority to their enemies. "Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the Lord thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible."[1]

Let us suppose again such a kindred spirit in another community looking on; and the *civil* constitution of Israel presents itself to him in a remarkable and lofty light, as well as its religious worship. The nations of the surrounding heathen world had no corporate life, and seemed only to exist for the sake of swelling the pride and feeding the rapacity of the fierce monarchs at their head. The people had no rights, and were only used as the tools of rapine and conquest; which issued again in the fall of the pettier princes to aggrandise some stronger one. "Threescore and ten kings," said Adoni-bezek, "having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table."[2] Jabin[3] had an extent of warlike equipment which implied the wholesale robbery and oppression even of his own subjects. Nations thus existed in order to raise up some horrible embodiment of barbarous pride, and exalt some one man above his fellows, to delight in the mere savage exercise of power. But Israel, as a civil community, presented a very different sight. It was, in the first place, without that type of pride, the Eastern king. No barbarous court, with its tyranny, cruelties, and coarse pomp and show, impersonated the nation,

[1] Deut. vii. 21. [2] Judges i. 7. [3] *Ibid.* iv. 3.

representing it in its very worst aspect. The government was a declared theocracy, exalting God and keeping down man. And it may be added that even in later times, when a king had appeared in Israel, he was still a king *under* a theocracy,[1] which latter was only modified by the kingly office, and still continued by the mouth of prophecy to direct it: he was not a king upon the barbarous model. Israel thus appeared in the light of a free community, which existed for the good of all its members; this was a striking contrast to every other national constitution in the world. And its laws spoke in the same direction. Though defective upon a modern Christian standard, they maintained justice and human rights. They involved the great principle of public good as the end and object of the state, in distinction from human greatness and power.

The whole career, again, of the nation, and the striking events connected with it, would tend to impress that kindred spirit whom we have been supposing to look on *ab extra*, with a strong idea of the high destiny of such a people. The Exodus was a great religious migration, undertaken by the nation in order to release itself from a religious as well as earthly servitude. Both chains were fast tightening about it; the religion could not have free exercise under such a yoke, that room and action which was essential to its life, and without which it only existed as a suppressed tradition, tending to die out;—that necessary

[1] Warburton's *Divine Legation*, Book v. sect. iii. Davison *on Prophecy*, p. 202, ed. 1845.

field for itself which was claimed in the Divine command to Pharaoh : "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness."[1] The wandering in the wilderness was a period of religious trial, when the privations of a hard life were so great as almost to break down the spirit of the people, and tempt them even to a return to Egypt. But the trial, though with many intervening lapses, being borne, the nation was exhibited in a still higher light. The Revelation of the Law again, made in the wonderful way so suitable to that stage of probation, was an event which laid the foundation of the nation deep; gave its religion the fixity of a formal institution, moulded it for futurity, and stamped its destiny the more plainly on its forehead. The march out of the wilderness, through opposing nations into Canaan, manifested the courage of faith, and the inspiration with which Israel fought when he felt the presence of God. The entrance into Canaan, with the ark of the covenant going before and heading the procession of the tribes, was a solemn seizure of the country in the name of God. It was the inauguration of a religious invasion,—a holy war. "Ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire."[2] Thenceforth Israel fought not against man only, but against idolatry, and for the true religion.

Let us imagine, then, all these aspects of the Jewish people present to the person whom we have been supposing; together, moreover, with the knowledge that

[1] Exod. vii. 16. [2] Deut. vii. 5.

this people professed to be the receptacle of a special Divine promise, which gave them an inalienable right to the land of Canaan. And let Jael be this person. The war then—for this was only a later stage of the war of invasion—is raging between the invader and the idolatrous and infamous Canaanite. She believes that Israel represents the cause of truth and righteousness in the world, and that the Canaanite represents the cause of evil. She believes that the Canaanitish rule is a curse, a scandal which cries aloud for removal; and that it is the design of an avenging and a compassionate Providence that this plague should be extinguished. And now, it would appear, is the very time that God has chosen for the execution of this purpose. For what is the situation of affairs? A Divine command has come to Deborah to make war upon Jabin and the Canaanites. So extraordinary a fact as a woman rising up to rouse the spirit of Israel to a war, and calling together an army to fight the Canaanites, must show the intention of Providence; and that she had a mission for this object. Under this belief—that a Divine decree had gone forth for the destruction of Sisera and his army—a whole Israelitish army had collected, the land had been stirred from one end to the other, the peaceful pursuits of the population had been abandoned for war, preparations had been made, a military leader to assist the prophetess had also been appointed, and a battle had been fought. The Divine command then could be no secret; it had been the warrant for raising an army; and had had a public result. Why

then should not Jael have known of it, and believed it? And if so, did not the knowledge of it, and belief in it, put her under the same obligation under which it put the Israelites, to obey and execute it? That this command was limited to the Israelites, and was not a warrant to any one who knew of and believed in it, would be a gratuitous assumption. Jael knew that God had crowned the courageous effort of Israel with success, a great battle had been won; and now the flying Canaanite leader is brought by an apparent chance into her very tent; he is in her power, and she can "bruise the head" of the corrupt race, and destroy the Canaanites in their chief. She immediately pronounces it to be an opportunity put in her way by Providence,—that Providence which plainly designed that this sacred race should possess the land in the place of the old stock. She kills Sisera as an enemy of God.

Let us go a little further back, and place before ourselves the general situation of the Israelites in the promised land at this time. The extirpation of the old Canaanitish stock was the original and fundamental law of the whole settlement of Israel in Canaan. This had been interrupted and delayed, but it still continued to be the law of settlement; and the consequence was that any war which broke out with the Canaanitish people still continuing in the country, became immediately by this traditionary law a war of extermination. Even wars of self-defence became by this necessary interpretation wars of religious extermination.[1] As soon as any war arose against a nation within

[1] Exod. xxiii. 31; Deut. vii. 16.

the borders of the promised land, "instead of accepting them as subjects by treaty," says Michaelis, "or even taking them for slaves . . . . the natural consequence of a war carried on by a sovereign for the sake of acquiring new subjects, ... the destruction of the inhabitants was the primary condition of conquest."[1] "To the Canaanites no terms were to be offered: their cities were not even summoned to surrender: no capitulation was to be granted (for this is the meaning of the Hebrew word *to make a covenant*), but they were to be destroyed by the sword; so that these illegal possessors of Palestine, to save their lives and moveables, had no alternative left, but to abandon the country before the Israelites approached."[2]

The complete execution indeed of this fundamental law was long suspended. Though it was now more than a century since the entrance under Joshua, the country was very imperfectly occupied, and the old inhabitants were still in possession of some of the most important portions. It was as yet only a mixed and divided occupation. "The conquest was over," says Dr. Stanley, "but the upheaving of the conquered population still continued. The ancient inhabitants, like the Saxons under the Normans, still retained their hold on large tracts and on important positions throughout the country."[3] This delay in the execution of the fundamental law of Israel's settlement in Canaan had been indeed designed by God—the reason given being, "lest," in the too sudden extermination of the old in-

[1] Michaelis' *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*, Book. ii. Art. 28.

[2] *Ibid.* Art. 62.

[3] *Lectures on the Jewish Church*, p. 287.

habitants, "the beasts of the field increase upon them;"[1] but it had also been prolonged *beyond* its due time by the sin of the people, "in making leagues with the inhabitants of the land,"[2]—in voluntarily coming to terms with the old races, and treating the Canaanites, upon whom a Divine curse had been laid, upon the footing of ordinary nations with whom they might live on friendly terms. They were to keep them at arm's length: it was not fitting that the destined destroyer should be living on social terms with the doomed people, and the executer of Divine justice be, in the interim, friends with the criminal. He was to be faithful to the solemnity of his mission, and not to trifle with it.[3] But this rule had been neglected, and the punishment had been a postponement of the full occupation of the land. The execution, however, of the fundamental law of extirpation was only suspended all this time; the original command made allowance for delay:[4] this whole period was only one prolonged invasion.

This posture of things gave a particular character to the Israelitish wars of independence, of which the war of Deborah against Jabin, king of Canaan, was one. These were in fact wars of aggression and extermination as well as of self-defence. As soon as any war arose against a nation within the borders of the promised land—though it might be a war of resistance to begin with, and to shake off some tyrant's yoke—once begun and going on, it was a war of extermi-

[1] Exod. xxiii. 29, 30; Deut. vii. 22.
[2] Judges ii. 1, 2, 3.
[3] Exod. xxiii. 21; Judges ii. 1, 2, 3.
[4] Deut. vii. 22, 23, 24.

nation, proceeding upon the fundamental law of the Canaanitish settlement, which was the law of extermination. The people must be dispossessed some time, and now was the time:—now that a war had broken out; this was the direction which Israel was bound to give to the war. He might have upon his borders for years a Canaanite kingdom, too formidable to attack; but if this power attacked *him*, and still more, if the attack was successful, and the galling and intolerable servitude which followed it compelled him to rebel—in that case Israel being precipitated by events into a death struggle with a people whom he had been expressly commanded to destroy, now was the time when he was distinctly placed under an obligation to *execute* this command, and to destroy this people. Indeed the tyranny of the Canaanites, and their success at times in dragging Israel under their yoke, became in this way the means by which he was roused to the ultimate conquest of the country. Had he been let alone, he might have rested; and after the first irruption was over, the newcomer might have fallen back into quiet habits; but he was goaded to conquest by oppression and subjugation, and in rebellion against tyranny he became the executer of the original law of extirpation.

To return to the particular war with which we are now concerned. "The Lord," it is said, "sold the children of Israel into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan." The kingdom of Jabin is here called "Canaan" in a local sense, which is probably, however, connected

with some early supremacy of this particular northern kingdom over the whole of Canaan in the large sense. "It was a tradition," says Dr. Stanley, "floating in the Gentile world, that, at the time of the irruption of Israel, the Canaanites were under the dominion of a single king. This is inconsistent with the number of chiefs who appear in the Book of Joshua. But there was one such, who appears in the final struggle, in conformity with the Phœnician version of the event. High up in the north was the fortress of Hazor; and in early times the king who reigned there had been regarded as the head of the others. He bore the hereditary name of Jabin or 'the Wise,' and his title indicated his supremacy over the whole country. . . . It was under his auspices [the writer is speaking of Joshua's invasion] that the final gathering of the Canaanite race came to pass. Round him were assembled the heads of all the tribes who had not yet fallen under Joshua's sword."[1] The northern kingdom of "Canaan" kept up still—in Deborah's time—some of its early suzerainty, and was able to enlist the services of various minor kings in the present contest. "The *kings* came and fought, then fought the *kings* of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo."[2]

The kingdom of Jabin, then, or the northern kingdom of "Canaan," was within the confines of the promised land; and the territories which composed it had been appropriated, at the partition under Joshua, to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. The capital,

[1] *Lectures on the Jewish Church*, p. 258. [2] Judges v. 19.

Hazor, was within the limits of Naphtali.[1] But neither of these tribes had ejected the old inhabitants. "Zebulun, we are told in the first chapter of Judges, did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, etc., but the Canaanites . . . dwelt among them. . . . Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, . . . but he dwelt among the Canaanites."[2] The kingdom of "Canaan," indeed, as we have seen, had signally recovered itself after the blow of Joshua's victory; had regained even part of its original supremacy, and, reversing the position of things, had subjugated Israel.

The war against Jabin, king of Canaan, then, when it had once arisen, was, according to the original terms of the Israelitish invasion and the very law of Israel's settlement in Canaan, a war of extermination as well as of independence. The Divine command for the destruction of the Canaanites was still in full force, only awaiting proper and suitable occasions for the execution of it. This was such an occasion. The war once begun and raging, had an extirpating direction given to it by the force of that statute. Jabin's kingdom occupied space which was wanted, which was part of the Israelitish map, which had been already assigned, in the distribution, to particular tribes. It must therefore be overthrown, and the ground cleared for Israelitish possession. Later in history indeed, when the Israelitish dominion had been established, and the Divine purpose answered, this command to extirpate may have received a qualification such as justified

[1] Joshua xix. 36. [2] Judges i. 30, 33.

the toleration of the Jebusites as residents in the country, when Jerusalem was taken by David; but at the time of the war with Jabin, Israel was struggling for his very existence in the country, and the Divine decree of destruction had as much political necessity on its side as in the days of Joshua.

The war with Jabin then had been undertaken at the express command of God, given on that occasion, and under the direction of an inspired person—Deborah the prophetess—who "judged Israel at that time." To a cursory glance the "judges" of Israel might look like civil rulers raised up from time to time to govern and administer justice in a period of anarchy, when no settled government existed in the country. But this would not be a true view of the judge's office. Israel was not without a settled government all this time. There was a code of law, and there were constituted authorities; there was what may be called a civil constitution, which was working all this time, even in the intervals between the judges; so that the civil government of the people did not depend on them. Michaelis constructs out of the Scripture materials a sketch of what this polity was; to which he adds the following statement:—"It will now," he says, "be easily conceivable how the Israelitish state might have subsisted, not only without a king, but even, occasionally, without that magistrate who was denominated a *judge*, although we read of no supreme council of the nation. Every tribe had always its own chief magistrate; subordinate to whom, again, were the heads of families;

and if there was no general ruler of the whole people, there were yet twelve lesser commonwealths, who, in certain cases, united together, and whose general convention would take measures for their common interest."[1] The civil government of the Israelites being thus provided for by this polity, the Judge when he rose up was an extraordinary officer to meet some great emergency from without, and to rescue Israel from foreign foes. Such were Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson. Deborah indeed "dwelt under the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment;"[2] but her chief mission was evidently military,—to save Israel from subjugation by Jabin. She was raised up in a time of civil disorder; but in fact a judge was a military functionary rather than a civil one. The appearance of a Judge was thus of itself a war portent, heralding a great national call to arms. And in the present case the commission given to the Judge and executed by the people was not only to resist and repel, but to "destroy." "I will deliver Sisera with his chariots and his multitude into thine hand." "The hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had *destroyed* Jabin, king of Canaan." It was the language of the original invasion. Moses had predicted a pause and a delay in the conquest, but also a repetition of the work of destruction after that delay. "Thou mayest

[1] *Commentaries on Laws of Moses*, Book ii. Art. 46.

[2] Judges iv. 5.

not consume them at once"[1]—but still "The Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction. And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven."[2]

Now, then, to revert to the original question. We cannot but assume as the most natural supposition, that Jael is well acquainted with the general state of the case, *i.e.*, that a Divine command has gone forth for the destruction of Sisera and his host. In that case she has as much right to kill Sisera as Deborah herself has to do so; she is as much even under an obligation to do so as Deborah herself. She is obviously acting, to begin with, under the impulse of that enthusiastic movement, whatever it was, which has taken possession of the Israelites, and of which Deborah is the head. As women there is a common type in her and in Deborah. It is a mark of a great national revolution and climax of feeling when women go out of their way to fight and take part in deeds of violence like men. Jael and Deborah were both in this current, though in very unequal situations,—the one as leader of the war, the other only as performing one strong act in it. Still they are obviously carried away by one common enthusiasm, and have apparently one common access to the Divine commands with respect to the Canaanites. One woman inoculates the other with a common patriotism and a common enmity. We meet in Scripture with other outside witnesses to the call of the Jewish people to occupy

[1] Deut. vii. 22. [2] Deut. vii. 23, 24.

Canaan, and dispossess the old inhabitants. Rahab was such a witness; she recognised the right of the invaders to the country. Why? Because she believed in the Divine promise to the chosen people. Jethro was such a witness, Balaam was such a witness, Caleb was such a witness. This was outside faith. Jael then believed in the Divine promise to the Jewish people, upon which its right to Canaan and to extirpate its population was founded.

It is too commonly assumed, in comments upon the act of Jael, that Jael herself was altogether removed from the religious influences and motives of this extraordinary occasion; that she was an isolated person in this whole transaction, and that she killed Sisera on a sudden impulse simply, without any participation in the Israelitish belief and mission. But this is certainly contrary to the whole look of the transaction, which is all the other way. There is an extraordinary stir, the land is moved, and a large part of Israel, near where Jael resides, is roused and in arms. The occasion of this stir is the Divine command. Sisera, routed in battle, flies from the Israelitish spears into Jael's tent, and the rest follows. Jael, after the deed, comes out to meet the Israelitish general, who is in pursuit of Sisera, and tells him that she has forestalled him. Deborah praises her deed. The whole look of things is that Jael is one with Israel throughout, that she acts upon the impulse which has roused Israel. Deborah extols her just as if she were a sister in the faith.

And we must take into account here that Jael was

not a Canaanitish woman. Had she been, indeed, she might still have believed in the mission of the chosen people, as Rahab did (*Note* 4), and have been an Israelite in faith. But Jael was of the family of the Kenites—a family founded by Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, connected by affinity with Israel, followers of the Israelitish migration, and moreover, hereditary worshippers of the true God. She was of the same stock with one who, in a later age, came to meet Jehu as he drove in his chariot to Samaria to fulfil his purpose of destroying the worshippers of Baal. "He lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot."[1] A later Kenite thus superintended a slaughter of Israelitish idolaters, not accomplished without some deception, as an earlier Kenite had also, not without the same tactics, slain the leader of the idolatrous Canaanites. Jael was thus by birth an Israelite in faith and worship. Her tribe had, as some commentators suppose, the position of proselytes, worshipping according to the Mosaic Law, and only differing from Israel in not having a title to the promised land, which was confined to the blood of Abraham. They were, at any rate, true worshippers of the one God. It is true that the Kenites as a body, kept aloof from this war, and were at peace with Jabin; but why may not Jael have been a be-

[1] 2 Kings x. 15.

liever in heart in Deborah's mission among her own people, and in their eyes an enthusiast? Would Deborah have acknowledged the right of a house thus connected with Israel to make an engagement of its own with a public enemy, and to dictate an abstinence from perfect partisanship with Israel to Jael? Was it at all of the character of the Divine dispensation under which Deborah and Jael both lived to allow of such an inference? It is indeed the great blot upon her act, according to any modern standard of international relations, that her tent was, by the agreement of her own tribe and her husband at its head, established as a rightful shelter for Sisera; and that Sisera could not but have supposed that he was protected against such a snare as was spread for him on that occasion. But there can be no doubt that the dispensation of that day completely overrode any scruple of international law. Scripture itself challenges the validity of the objection by the bold admission that "there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite." An express command of God supersedes any human arrangement or contract. And Jael's religion is a matter between God and her own heart, with which she does not mean state law to interfere. It is an early case of religious independence of mind.

It ought to be noted lastly, in forming our estimate of Jael's act, who the person she put to death *was*. He was not a common Canaanite, but the Canaanitish general and leader, especially the mark of the Divine wrath; and against whom principally,

as the representative of the Canaanitish power, the thunderbolt was aimed and the decree of destruction sent forth—"I will deliver *him* into thine hand." He was not even an ordinary Canaanitish leader. There is evidently something extraordinary about this man—Sisera. It must strike any reader as remarkable that we hear nothing about Jabin personally in this war. He takes no part, he does not appear on the scene, and is a cypher; while the man who does all and wields the whole force of the Canaanitish kingdom is, as far as appearance goes, a private person, who has risen to extraordinary power and to the head of the army. Jabin is a nullity; Jabin's general is everything. This is an unusual spectacle in primitive times. In the wars of the Old Testament, and indeed of all early history, the king always heads his own army. Chederlaomar and the kings with him lead their own armies; the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their allies lead theirs; the four kings who unite against Joshua lead theirs. Pharaoh himself pursues the Israelites to the Red Sea. Much later in sacred history the kings of Israel and Judah always head their own armies. The kings of Syria, Assyria, and Babylon, do the same. David had his "captain of the host" under him, and entrusted some wars practically to him. Joab was sent against Rabbah;[1] and Joab, Abishai, and Ittai were sent to suppress Absalom's rebellion. But custom still enforced the presence of the king at the head of his troops sooner or later in the expedition. David was summoned to

[1] 2 Sam. xi. 1.

Rabbah before it was taken; and only the pressing and affectionate dissuasion of his subjects induced him to depart from custom and stay away from the expedition against Absalom, when he had said—"I will surely go forth with you myself."[1] Sennacherib, though he sent officers in advance "with a great host" to Jerusalem to threaten the city, headed the expedition against it.[2]

In the Homeric age the king always leads his own army. In later ages, when war became more of a science, the office of general sometimes devolved upon the great professional soldier, and was detached from the monarch, but the king is his own general always in times long posterior to the days of the Judges. When, then, in the war with Jabin all primitive rule is broken, and a general who is not the king heads the army; when Jabin is in the background and Sisera is the great man, it is natural to suppose that such a general was no common man; that we have in him a person of commanding mind, who has risen by the force of his character to the head of affairs, and contrived to collect all the Canaanitish spirit and all the strength and the resources of the Canaanitish kingdom around him. Such men do rise up in difficult times, and become the representatives and the impersonations of the race or nation which they head. The very settlement of Israel as a conqueror in Palestine placed, of itself, the Canaanitish remainder in imminent danger; the invader had one object before him, which rested in his belief upon a Divine promise,

[1] 2 Sam. xviii. 2. [2] 2 Kings xix. 36.

the same which had inspired the first invasion. He would evidently drive out the Canaanite, if the Canaanite did not crush him. The kingdom of Jabin, in fighting for the conquest of Israel, fought for its own existence, and such a juncture is apt to call up a great and leading mind to the head. Sisera would thus be, by no unnatural interpretation of the facts before us, the very life and soul of the Canaanitish kingdom; and if his whole army perished and he escaped, "the snake was scotched, not killed." A great man has recovered himself many a time after complete defeat, and after losing one army raised another. You are not safe while such a foe is alive, and the one mind which animates, inspirits, and directs a nation which is your deadly enemy, is left to it. But if Sisera was such a ruling spirit and the prime mover of the war, the Divine decree of destruction, which had gone forth against the Canaanitish host generally, applied with a hundredfold strength to him: and Jael, if she believed in that decree, would think that this, if any, was a case in which it should be executed. Was the inferior mass to be slaughtered, and was the arch-enemy to escape? If Sisera was *the* great man on the Canaanitish side, this consideration heightens the enormous responsibility which the sudden appearance of Sisera at Jael's tent door throws upon her. Shall she not at once complete the rescue of Israel by killing Sisera? Or shall she give way to a scruple and save him? In this case she sends Sisera back to his own country to take again the part of leader of the Canaanites, and collect chariots and horsemen for another invasion.

He has another chance given him. It is impossible to tell what a great man may do if he has this other chance given him. She must be either treacherous to Israel, then, or treacherous to Sisera; she must act the friendly part to Israel, and consummate the rescue which has begun, by the death of the great enemy; or by sparing him reserve a contest for another day, with perhaps a different result. It would be difficult to conceive that Jael's feelings, after sending Sisera back again to Hazor to construct another war of invasion, would not have been the consciousness that she had been guilty of a great piece of treachery to a sacred cause, and a sacred nation. This was the only alternative which was open to Jael, and it would seem to have come upon her all at once, and with a short time to decide it. Sisera himself, by simply appearing on the scene and presenting himself to Jael, placed her in an enormous difficulty; for either she must give up Israel by taking part with its great enemy, or give up him. She decides that the real rescue of Israel requires the death of Sisera. St. Augustine's supposition, that Jael had a special revelation made to her, upon which she acted when she slew Sisera, is a gratuitous one. But it is not at all necessary to resort to such a conjecture in order to put Jael in the situation of an authorised executer of a Divine command.

This, then, is the explanation of the act of Jael, viz., that it was done in obedience to a Divine command, not communicated specially to her, but which had been made public, and acted upon by the

Israelites, and of which she would have the same evidence that they had. For Israel could not be the only authorised executer of such a command. The knowledge of it would in itself confer the authority, nay, lay the obligation, to put it into effect. It is most important, with reference to objectors, to remark upon the history of Jael's act that this account is evidently a *fragment*. By a fragment I mean that it is an incomplete statement of the transaction to which it relates; and wants filling up in order to make it a whole and complete account. The story as thus given does not explain itself, because no reason and motive are assigned to the act, so that that which is necessary to the understanding of any human action whatever, and still more of so extraordinary an act as this, has to be supplied. We are told nothing of the mind of the agent in this very brief statement, which is introduced with the greatest abruptness, without any introduction, and without any reflection upon it afterwards. It is not, however, sufficiently observed generally that the account of Jael's act *is* thus incomplete. People accept the short abrupt statement as if it were a whole. A man suddenly enters her tent; she welcomes him and feeds him; he falls asleep, and she kills him. It is supposed that he was an enemy, but how and in what sense is not said. Here is a gap.

The great error in the treatment of the act of Jael has been looking at it without the consideration of this gap, and apart from all those surrounding circumstances which so evidently affix the character and the motive to the act, and give it its true inter-

pretation. There is a whole extraordinary and exceptional state of things existing at the time, and a peculiar law is in course of execution against the Canaanites. Jael's act does not stand by itself, but has relation to this whole state of things. It takes place in the thick of it, and is part of the whole action which rises up under a peculiar, pressing dispensation. If that whole action is right, and if the exterminating war is justified by the Divine command, Jael's act comes under the general head of this war and this justification. It is done under the impulse of the whole movement, and under the sanction of the general anathema which allowed no rights to the Canaanites, and treated nothing as due to an outlawed race. It was done in execution of the exterminating sentence applying to the nation, nor can it be convicted as wrong if the rest of the war was right.

It must be noted, however, with respect to such an act as Jael's, that no explanation can do away with those repulsive features of it which result from its collision with ordinary rules of conduct. If the latter are overridden legitimately, they still are *overridden;* if certain natural feelings are justifiably violated, the violation still remains: though the act be under the circumstances defensible, this discord continues. Nor does this consequence go, even if the reason be satisfied; but, though the deed be inspired by the sublimest faith and zeal, still clings to it; so that even with admiration is mingled a partial repugnance, owing to the mere circumstance of something in our nature having to give way. It is evident

that some place must be allowed in morality for acts of this kind; when we see how many different relations we stand in, one of which may come into collision with another. Justice must thus sometimes supersede family affection and friendship; yet the opposition of principles, both so sacred, cannot issue in a pleasing act; though we may admire the moral strength of will to which has yielded the affection, whatever it was, which ought to have yielded. The ancient world had its great actions of this type, which were handed down as exemplars; such was that of Brutus condemning his own sons to death for conspiring against their country,[1] and the consul Manlius' execution of his own son fresh from the victorious single combat, the engagement in which was a breach of military discipline. Scripture contains many acts in which a Divine command is fulfilled at the cost of natural feeling. When Zebah and Zalmunna say to Gideon, "Rise thou and fall upon us; for as the man is, so is his strength,"[2] the magnanimity of the captive princes seems to be a motive for sparing them; and when Agag had once felt that "the bitterness of death" was past, the justice which hewed him in pieces before the Lord jars with natural clemency. It is quite as easy to suppose as not, that Jael had to overcome, by a great effort, a strong, warm, and generous feeling to a guest, in executing an imperious task of

[1] Infelix! Utcumque ferent ea facta minores;
Vincet amor patriæ, laudumque immensa cupido.
Virg. *Æn.*, vi. 823.

[2] Judges viii. 21.

faith. No explanation of an act can undo the actual composition of it, or remove an opposition of this kind within it; though the substance of an act is separable from the shock to the feelings. But though the act is repugnant to the feelings, the *character* of the agent is rescued when the act is done upon justifying grounds.

But a funereal strain alternates with the hostile triumph of Deborah, as she comes to the closing scene of Sisera. Mingling with the description of her treachery, the courtesies of Jael's tent to the Canaanite general wear the aspect of the last honours to the great. Deborah's idea is that of the great man's falling in the midst of the high deference paid him. If it was right that Jael should kill him, because his path crossed the awful scope of a Divine sentence, still such attentions, so long as he was alive, were in place; they marked him, though an enemy, still as foremost and as leader. We see the mournful contrast between life and death, which all poetry has lingered over. Greatness, as struck down at one blow, in the midst of its honours, and the tribute paid to it, produces a passing emotion of sympathy even in the mind of the Jewish prophetess, while her main thoughts follow her country's rescue: and the mighty foe is laid low in that grand solemnity of verse, and in that sad picture of death, in which a high compassion speaks—"At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet he bowed, he fell; where he bowed, there he fell down dead."

LECTURE VII.

CONNECTION OF JAEL'S ACT WITH THE MORALITY OF HER AGE.

IT was shown in the last Lecture that Jael's act was in obedience to a Divine command; though that command was not given separately and particularly to her;—in obedience to the command by which the present war had been undertaken against the Canaanites; which war, when it was once undertaken, became *ipso facto* a war of extermination, and joined that whole stream of hostile impulse which had begun the original invasion of the promised land. It was shown that, according to the natural interpretation of the sacred narrative, Jael must have known of the Divine command by which the present war was undertaken, and must have known of the nature and scope of the war. But such a scope and design in a war undertaken by Divine command, involved the duty of all who executed the Divine plan in the war, to take their part individually in the work of destruction, and to be prepared to kill the enemy wherever an opportunity was offered. And Sisera upon the present occasion specially gave Jael this opportunity.

Had then this general command to destroy the Canaanites, which included Sisera, been a command

in the full and ordinary sense in which that expression is used,—in the sense in which such a phrase is understood when it is said a Christian is commanded by God to do this or that; had this been the case, it might have been said that that command carried with it the full justification of the homicide: and it might have been said also that the act of treachery had the same justification, inasmuch as the Divine command could only have been executed by means of dissimulation. It might have been said that the circumstances under which the act was done took it entirely out of the ordinary estimate of such an act; because the person to whom it was done had been struck out of the roll of living humanity by an act of God; he had been proscribed as an outlaw, to whom the common offices of humanity, including that of continuing his life, were not due; he was one of a race against which utter extermination had been proclaimed; and he had been especially singled out for denunciation. But what were the obligations of Jael as regards such a person? Jael was under an obligation to kill him, and if so what obligation was she under to speak the truth to him?

It must be seen that such a defence as this would profess to be a full and complete defence of Jael; and that it would profess to acquit her wholly of anything laid to her charge; and to make it a fit and suitable act even for a Christian to do; everything would have been explained which was an obstruction to the perfect moral recognition of the act; and nothing would profess to have been wanting to a complete justifica-

tion. It is true the treachery is what has chiefly attracted attention to the act of Jael: and had the same act of homicide been done under different circumstances, had she, *e.g.*, killed Sisera as "a certain woman"[1] on the top of a tower killed Abimelech, by casting a piece of a millstone upon his head, nothing would have been said; but it is her treachery which has occasioned the great denunciation of her act. But this defence professes to be a complete justification of the deceit as well as of the homicide,—upon the supposition of a command of God to kill Sisera.

St. Paul's position appears to be that the duty of truth-speaking is an offshoot of the ordinary relations of man to man, and that it is a consequence of men being members one of another. The ground for the duty is the relation of charity in which we stand to each other, of the unity, moral and social, by which we are connected with each other. "Speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."[2] Deceit is a barrier between one man and another, and is therefore contrary to union and membership. The duty of speaking the truth thus takes its place under the general head of charity; of good and considerate treatment of others. Truth-speaking is not a universal isolated obligation which we are under;—a law to say truth under all circumstances, and in whatever relations we stand to the other party; but it *supposes* certain relations, viz., the ordinary relations of man with man, the

[1] Judges ix. 53. [2] Eph. iv. 25.

natural terms of fellowship with man,—that we are bound to perform all the offices of humanity to him, and to behave to him as a brother. When we speak of the certain and obvious obligation to sincerity, these are the relations which we suppose; and St. Paul places the duty of veracity upon its proper basis, and gives the law of truth its proper position in the frame and system of morals, when he assigns the duty of truth-speaking this large and deep source, this intelligible connection, and this inclusive rationale.

It appears to follow, then, that when these ordinary relations to a man cease, when the natural terms of fellowship with him are dissolved, and so far as they are dissolved, the duty of speaking truth to him no longer exists. The relations being at an end from which the duty of veracity proceeds, the duty goes with them; and the moral character of an untruth alters with the fundamental ground on which we stand toward the man.

Thus, with a murderer engaged in the act, it must be said we are not on natural terms of fellowship; the ordinary relations of man to man are suspended. Supposing him to ask information of us, then, in pursuit of his object, it is no duty to abstain from deceiving him. Speak the truth, for we are neighbours one of another. But such a man is not a neighbour and not a brother, he is deprived therefore of no right by deception. A man has evidently the right to take away the murderer's life, when it is necessary to do so, in order to save another life. But it is absurd to say that a man has a right to kill him

in order to protect another life, and that he has not a right to deceive him for the same purpose. A release, then, from the ordinary obligation to truth-speaking has been attributed to situations in which the contrary is necessary in order to save the life of another from the hands of a murderer. But it must seem that in any other case in which a man ceases to be a fellow,—and is thus out of membership and union with you,—he is naturally deprived of the same right to truth-speaking: where, *e.g.*, the relations of humanity are dissolved;—the great relation of man to man, that of keeping him alive, or being desirous of doing so.

A mere executioner may be regarded as a simple tool or weapon, but, in the case of Jael, here is a person who is more than this, who is bound by her will to seek the man's life, and take measures, if she can, to secure her end. This is plainly an unnatural relation of one man toward another man. But does not the right of truth-speaking presuppose the natural relations of humanity? It is not easy to conceive a more total contradiction to the natural relations between one man and another man than the duty of killing that other man. When you are so completely released, then, from the law of charity as that it has become your duty to aim at the death of another, are you still bound to openness and sincerity in your mode of seeking it? The duty of sincerity is so plainly connected with the law of human fellowship, that to say that upon the dissolution of that law no consequence at all could follow *to* that duty, would be a strange assertion. The

duty of truthfulness cannot co-exist with the *duty* of killing. The abnormal position with respect to life is thus disturbing to the regular position with regard to truth; if so important a modification of his general rights has taken place as that his right to life no longer exists, it is difficult to say what change may not have ensued in his right to truthfulness. Our duty to our neighbour is one whole; if our neighbour has forfeited no right, he has a claim upon that whole; but if he has forfeited the right to one part, it is difficult to say how that one part may not have affected another part. If one social relation has given way, we cannot say that another may not have been undermined by it.

Upon this general argument a defence of Jael has been attempted by some commentators which aims at being a complete justification of her under the circumstances; as though she might have done the act in every detail, being a Christian, *i.e.*, that the act is perfectly moral throughout. But we must see that the foundation gives way for such a defence as this. It is essential for such a perfectly-justifying defence,—inasmuch as the whole of it rests upon the foundation of a Divine command to kill, in the first instance,—that that command should have been without reserve, and that it should be capable of being fallen back upon as a true command of God, with the same perfect reliance with which we fall back upon a command of the Gospel. But it is evident that this command was made with a reserve, and that it is a command in a different sense from that of any command given under the Gospel. A Divine com-

mand to undertake a war of extermination could only, to begin with, necessarily have been a command by condescension to the defective state of man's moral perceptions in that age. It was impossible, as has been said in the foregoing Lectures, that people could have acknowledged a Divine command to make war in such a manner as this, unless they were themselves at the time under defective and erroneous moral conceptions. Thus a command with a reserve, in accommodation to man's ignorance or infirmity, is not really a command of God, because what it starts from is the evil in man, and not the perfect good in the Divine will. Jael having accepted a dispensation of accommodation to evil, has not the ground for availing herself of a perfectly-justifying defence, and such a defence is wasted upon her position. Another explanation suits her, which does not profess to be full justification, but which does give her the shelter of a particular dispensation.

The great omission, as we have seen, in the mind of that age was the omission of the idea of human individuality. When children were destroyed on account of the sin of the father, and nations were destroyed on account of the sins of certain portions of them: when, in fact, human sin was treated *en masse*, and not as a question relating to the individual only —such defective and unsound ideas of mankind on human individuality became an immediate cause of the rude and barbarous acts of that day. There are two characteristics of Jael's act: there is the destruction of life; and there is the treachery. It is her

treachery and dissimulation, as has been said, which have produced the great denunciation of her act. But the omission of the idea of human individuality takes away at bottom equally the right to life and the right to truth. It is upon the stand of his own individuality that man claims both life and truth. He has a right to his life being respected by others, and he has a right to truth at the hands of others, because he is himself a man. He takes his stand upon himself. Immediately he is regarded as an appendage to another—whether that other be an individual, a family, or a nation—he loses the intrinsic rights of man whether to life or truth. A loose notion of life and a loose notion of truth naturally go together; a dim conception of the property and a defective idea of the duty.

When the Duke of Wellington first went over to India he made the remark that the Hindus laboured under two great defects in their moral character—that they did not care for life, and they did not care for truth.[1] The putting the two together was a just piece of criticism, and showed that the comment was made upon a basis of true philosophy. There must be a due sense of the right of life in a man, a sense of his individuality, a sense of the existence of the personal being, in himself and upon his own account, before his right to truth can be made out. Truth-speaking is only a part of the general duty of doing to others as we would be done by; the right to it ceases with the general rights of man: it ceases

[1] *Wellington's Supplementary Despatches*, vol. i. p. 16.

with the fundamental relations of man to man, with the necessary claims which are inherent in man as fellow with man. A man must first have a right to his own existence, and then he may have a right to something further; but before everything else he must be treated as an individual being. But the early dispensation under which man was living then, did not treat him as such, because it appended him to something which was not himself, in the infliction of punishment and on the question of life. There must have been inadequate ideas of the individuality of man and of the rights of human life before a dispensation could have been received which enforced wars of extermination—wars which would now be contrary to morality,—for the reason that our ideas on the subject of human individuality and the rights of life are completely changed, and that we have been enlightened on these subjects upon which the early ages of mankind were in the dark. But when man was not treated as a person, as an individual being,—when he had not the right to life, he had not the right to truth-speaking either. What is the meaning of being obliged to speak truth to one who is not a person; obliged to speak truth to one who is not a substance; and who is not a being? He must be something substantial and must be something in himself, to whom truth *must* be spoken. A man who has not the right to his own existence, has lost the right to have truth spoken to him also. Deborah acted then from principles of reason, when she gathered from the right to destroy life, the right to disguise truth too,—when she

passed her imprimatur upon both the characteristics of Jael's act ;—when she looked upon Sisera as an outlaw, and a man without rights to truth, as soon as ever it was clear he had no right to his own life. The dispensation justified *in* the violation of life, the violation of truth ; the violation of life *was* the violation of truth ; justice and truth were the same thing : if Sisera was killed because being a Canaanite he had not the right to life, it was a much lighter thing to say that being a Canaanite he had not a right to have truth spoken to him.

Does the historical defence, then, of Jael's act, in the last Lecture, imply that it meets with the approbation of Scripture generally, and that it was a good act according to the principles laid down in Scripture as a whole ? The only part of Scripture, which at all witnesses upon this point, and commits Scripture, according to any standard, to an approbation of the act of Jael, is Deborah's praise of the act. The narrative itself only records the fact, and expresses no opinion of Scripture upon it. But Deborah's praise is clear and decided, and she declares that Jael " is blessed above women" on account of this act. Deborah was an inspired prophetess, and her approval of the act is identical with the approval of Scripture.

But what is the moral standard which Deborah acknowledges when she praises the act of Jael, and according to what standard is her praise given ? It is evident that this makes all the difference in the nature of the praise, and upon the question whether it was praise in the fullest sense or not. This praise is obviously

given, then, according to the standard of the time, as involved in the dispensation of the time, publicly received in the Israelitish body of that day as a religious community. This was the only standard which was known to Deborah ; and it was impossible that she should give her praise upon any other. It is sometimes vaguely supposed that when an act is praised *in* Scripture, it receives the praise of Scripture as *a whole*, and must therefore be an act absolutely good and correct, and equal to bearing the strictest examination in a court of morals under *any* dispensation, and in any age of the world. But to suppose this, is to suppose a totally different structure of Scripture and revelation from the real one ; it is totally to overlook the very principles which our Lord assumes in his Sermon on the Mount. The revelation which is made in Scripture is made up of different dispensations ; and different successive manifestations of God's will and character. The only dispensation which was known to Deborah was the dispensation under which she lived,—the dispensation under which the Israelites established themselves in Canaan. But this dispensation was in no disagreement whatever with the estimate of the act of Jael as a virtuous and a right act. It was a dispensation which supposed a defective state of moral ideas in the people, and which required for its own reception an erroneous standard of morals. The praise therefore bestowed under that dispensation upon a particular act, did not imply moral correctness, according to a universal standard, in that act ; did not satisfy the Bible as a whole, because it satisfied a part of the Bible. Deborah represented the

dispensation of the time, and Jael satisfied the dispensation of the time. Deborah's praise, therefore, was worthily given; but it did not imply its being given according to a universal standard.

And this consideration decides the sense of Deborah's praise of the treachery, as well as the homicide. Deborah contemplates both the treachery and the homicide, and it does not stop her praise, — "She brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the hammer." This was praise of the act in its twofold character of dissimulation and destruction. It was obviously not the idea of Deborah that there was anything wrong in either; the whole act counts as a noble manifestation of religious zeal. But the truth is, that the dispensation of the time tolerated both; it tolerated both and it justified both, by virtue of that one single omission which was made at the foundation of the dispensation; viz., the omission of the idea of human individuality. The dispensation was compelled to accommodate itself to the omission of this primary idea, because it was compelled to take man as he was; and he had not yet, in this stage of his growth, attained to this full idea. I say that Deborah, in pronouncing the act of Jael good, pronounced it to be good *according* to a particular dispensation. Whether an act is good or not in itself and universally, is a question of moral philosophy; but whether it is good according to a particular dispensation is not a question of moral philosophy but a question of simple history. It is simply to say, Was this act considered as a fact to

be good by persons competent to estimate it who lived under that dispensation? And upon that question is not Deborah as good a witness as we can find? Who is judge of what was a good act under that dispensation if Deborah is not? The act, by being praised by Deborah, proved itself to be a good act according to that standard; an act of morality, according to her own dispensation. She was by position a judge; and to be praised by her was equivalent to saying it was good according to that dispensation.

But though a good act according to a dispensation,—an act of faith, an act of love to Israel,—a Christian could not have done it, for the simple reason that he could not have accepted that dispensation by the authority of which it was done, by virtue of which Sisera became an outlaw, deprived of the right to life. No Divine command to destroy Sisera, apart from all reasons of human law, could have been acknowledged by a Christian; and therefore, inasmuch as the act could only be justifiable on the supposition of a Divine command to do it, a Christian is necessarily without evidence of the only justifying reason which could exist in the case. Christians have indeed sometimes acted upon Old Testament precedents, to which they have given their own application, but the use of such precedents at all has been wholly condemned by the Christian Church. Such acts as that of Jacob Clement and Ravaillac have had sentence passed on them as being simply immoral acts, and unable to be taken out of the catalogue of murders. Doubtless such acts under an early dispensation were very different acts, and

hold a very different moral rank; but when revived under a Christian light, they appear only as horrible and false; as lapses from a perfect dispensation to an imperfect, and from a dispensation of knowledge and light to one of ignorance and darkness.

But though it could not have been done by a Christian, it is not too much to say that the act of Jael was a grand though extreme specimen of that type of act which is produced by the proverb, Love your friend and hate your enemy. The act has everything to do both with a friend and an enemy. Sisera is an enemy in the deepest sense, as being an enemy of the adopted people of God. Here, then, Jael was only an enemy. But turn from the attitude of Jael toward the enemy, and you see immediately the *friend*. In her resolute rescue of Israel from the hand of the great Canaanite, in her summary suppression of what would have been the seed of another invasion—the return of Sisera to Hazor to renew his plots and hostilities,—here is the friend. People have generally only Sisera before them in contemplating this act; but Israel ought to be the principal object. The enemy ought not to occupy our minds, without the friend,—and the feelings toward the friend,—coming in to give the act its explanation, and invest it with its main motive. The act at first sight appears a solitary act, and the agent appears devoted only to her one dreadful work; but we have only to look around, and we see enthusiastic devotion to the Israelitish body; whose rescue from the enemy is evidently the great stimulus to the act. While showing

the ferocity and dissimulation considered due to an enemy, it gratifies a lofty partizanship for the people of God, and unbounded fervour for a cause. It is an act with all the warmth and public affection in it, which a public person gives to a great cause, who is determined that that cause shall not lose at all in his hands. Israel shall suffer no longer from fear of the enemy. The act thoroughly adopted the great precept of the older dispensation,[1] and hers was obviously just the character that carried out the precept to the utmost. The older dispensation divided the world in two, as regards moral relations toward them, and presented two objects,—one which naturally called for injury, and the other for love. So coupled together are the friend and the enemy, that even in the perpetration of the most violent deeds upon the enemy, one sees on the other side the overflowing friend. It is a real double side of a man; he really hates on one side and really loves on the other. That is the operation of the dispensation: it is real feeling both ways. The law does not admit of neutrality and ambiguity; still less does it admit of enmity only: it is a law of enmity and love both. It does not allow of the affectionate side of a man being chilled, or of a man's heart being nipped and blighted by hostile and malicious thought, which is a common effect of carrying out hostile feelings; it supposes with enmity, love; the two sets of feelings are really in full play toward their respective proper objects. In Jael's act we see both the enemy *toward* whom,

[1] Matt. v. 43.

and friend *for* whom it is done. Both are implanted in the act, and the ardent rescue is as conspicuous as the dreadful death. Deborah's thanksgiving reveals on the enemy's side irretrievable ruin, and on Israel's the completeness of triumph.

With respect alike to the charge of homicide and treachery, Jael must be taken in connection with the facts of her day. What she thought upon the right to life, and what she thought upon the right to truth, was only a consequence of the fundamental want in the ideas of the age—the idea of man, in which his attributes and his rights were alike contained. We find her enthusiastically joining in a war of extirpation, which is a plain violation of the rights of life in the individual; and this primary want of respect for man is the necessary foundation of the subordinate want of respect for truth. But the faults of the age leave in the act the faith of the individual; the fraternisation with the good, the acknowledgment of prophecy, the look forward to the future. It would be useless to frame for Jael's conduct a rationale, which would present it to us as satisfying a later and a Christian standard of morality. We find another standard at that time in occupation of the world, and marking the dominion of the unenlightened mind. But it should never be forgotten that this act was an act of true religious zeal done in defence of religion, and for the preservation of a Divine dispensation in the world, against idolatry, polytheism, and corruption of morals.

Not that the true idea of man was entirely want-

ing in the age of the older dispensation,—far from it; and still less that the offshoots of it were wholly wanting,—the respect for life and the respect for truth. The idea of man as a personal and individual being is contained in the first chapter of Genesis, in the very account of the creation of man. That man was made in the image of God anticipates the whole development of man as an individual being, with his attributes, his rights, and his prospects. Truth was enforced in the ninth commandment. There were two opposing principles in the old dispensation; there was the idea of man as a mere appendage to something without him, some body or some individual with which he was identified in guilt and in punishment, and in which his personality was absorbed, so that he was killed if the other being was guilty; and, struggling with this idea of man, as a reflection or an appendage to something else, there was the other idea of him as a substantial being who had his existence in himself, and whose life was his own property, and could only be lost by his own act. The last of these two ideas must have existed from the first, in order to be developed so fully as it ultimately was: to be the seed of a great future, it must have had a place all along; but still it was the seed at first rather than the mature idea. One estimate of man conflicted with another:—one which deprived him of fundamental rights and of justice, with one which announced that he was made in the image of God. The latter had the strength of reason on its side, and as a matter of course gained the victory over a temporary principle.

The general aim of the foregoing observations has been to show that the act of Jael arose out of the *dispensation*, that it represents the dispensation, and that it does not represent the individual only. Did the act represent the individual only, it would have been a great mistake in Deborah to put the prophetical imprimatur upon it, and incorporate it in the Scripture of the old dispensation. But it was not the act of an individual only; it was an act which represented a dispensation. That dispensation starts with the sanction of a class of actions which could not be done by an enlightened people with full and mature moral perceptions. There was therefore no reason why its sanction should not be given to an act like that of Jael. The dispensation did not respect the rights of man to life; it was no more then, than an agreement with such a foundation that it should not respect the rights of man to truth; and that, when a great enemy of the sacred nation lost one right, he lost the other too. Both rights were in fact lost in the one omission of the primary idea of individuality, which deprived man of the standing ground upon which the two important claims were built. That the act did represent the dispensation is shown in truth by the mere fact of the praise of Deborah having been bestowed upon it; for a good act, according to the standard of a particular dispensation, is a simple matter for historical evidence; and is shown in the fact of competent persons, under the dispensation, acknowledging and publishing its merits.

Let us compare an early dispensation with early

states of society in respect to these clouds upon them. We know it is one great point of comparison between civilisation and barbarism, the mode in which they respectively treat human life; and it may be added that another point of comparison is the mode in which they respectively treat truth. In civilisation the theory itself imposes respect for life and respect for truth both; but it can hardly be said to do so with respect to either in barbarism. One conspicuous point of comparison between civilisation and barbarism lies in the different position of lying: it reflects disgrace, theoretically and according to the system under the one, but hardly under the other. A rude and mixed standard marks the dominion of the uncivilised mind. There was a great deal of generosity in the mind of that day, an enthusiasm for nation, family, and tribe, and a devotion to old custom and law. But this poetical framework of things also admitted of strong special shapes of treachery and deceit, and of these rising into great prominence, and assuming a place among the characteristics of the age and nation. Wherever the creed of Love thy friend and hate thine enemy, in short, is the established creed, deceit and treachery become a strong popular mode of action. The system of clanship especially represented this old maxim. People were faithful and loyal to their own tribe, and sacrificed themselves for it. What stories have come down to us of undying affection, of indomitable courage and fidelity, of enthusiastic adventure! But with the friend there was the enemy. It might be supposed that two perpetual foes would sometimes have thought for a

moment about what it was which made them so; why it was that they must always be fighting: the rationale of national animosity must sometimes have puzzled them; what it was that made hatred an original necessity for each: but in truth such investigation was entirely out of their way; they had never known themselves other than enemies; enmity therefore was to them a law of nature.

Such was the doctrine of an enemy, and it was the infallible effect of the doctrine to produce deceit. In rude ages "the enemy" was a character which emerged;—one of the actual *dramatis personæ* of the scene—to whom the popular belief attached that it was lawful to lie to him, and that he had ceased to be our neighbour or our brother; that fellowship was over, and that with the ground of communion and fellowship the duty of veracity had ceased. That duty being only the expression of the fact that we are members one of another, men had no right to it when they were natural enemies. The enemy was one who was out of the pale of charity, and with whom injurious relations were natural. But if injurious relations were natural, untruthful relations were natural also (*Note* 5). It is thus that in early rude ages, and in the periods of tribe or clan, where the sword takes so prominent a part, deceit takes an equally prominent part. The one law is made to flow in thought logically from the other. The sword takes away life; he has no right to truth-speaking who has no right to life. The period of combat, violence, and open carnage, thus becomes specially a period of trick, stratagem, and

falsehood too. As the "enemy" was the natural object of violence, he was the natural victim of a lie; and rude forms of society fostered a remarkable and subtle mixture of character. You would have expected, at first view, that the qualities which this period and kind of life would have fostered, would have been the open and daring ones, and these exclusively or chiefly; that they would have raised the test of physical courage and daring, and would have encouraged with these open robbery, violence, and aggression; but that they would not have given their countenance to treachery, dissimulation, and underhand dealings. But on looking into the modes of acting and the pervading models of rude times, we find an overwhelming quantity of fraud and deceit. They impose upon one another, fabricate intricate plots, and construct subtle measures; stratagem and conspiracy constituting their prominent course of action. They adopt what is necessary. They find that deceit is necessary for them, in order to produce anything formidable, to gather things to a head, and bring any move of the tribe, or of a party, to its proper strength; to collect resources in such a shape as to secure success. Although, therefore, on the one side they have the roughness of defiance, impulse, and impetuosity, on the other, their whole line of conduct is underhand. The daring temper is quite consistent with the deceitful. They must do what is effectual, and underground work is effectual. Men dissimulate in order to strike a great blow when it is wanted; and treacherous con-

cealment tells at last. Rude times, on the same principle on which they use force, use deceit.

But the man being true to his clan and to his neighbour, treachery became a special and local quality, and was prevented from entering completely into the general character by virtue of its confinement to "the enemy." A man was false in a hostile relation; but only see him as a neighbour, and he was true.

But not only this, the principle once admitted of loving friends and hating enemies, the two kinds of action, true and false, become a natural alternation. They are so hearty in both that they never think of those to whom they are false without thinking of those to whom they are true. As a piece of treachery is played on one side, an image meets them from the other side of bright and spotless fidelity. They know they do everything for their friends,—go through any sacrifice. Their very treachery, then, looks different according to its company. Lying is the natural dealing with the enemy, as truth is the natural dealing with the friend. There is therefore nothing to apologise for in lying; he only gets it who deserves it, and to whom it is natural conduct. A lie accompanies truth as the shadow the substance.

The creed of Love your friend and hate your enemy thus produced, as its natural consequence, falsehood. The circumstances of the world, indeed, produce various modifications and shades of the character of the "enemy." He is not always a person who aims at life, and must be met by an equal blow; he is only one who exists in some injurious relation to you. But

in proportion as a natural law of hostility exists under any form, so a natural law of untruthfulness follows as a consequence. Thus in the old-fashioned school of former days, when the schoolmaster figured in the boyish imagination as a natural enemy, he was also the natural recipient of a falsehood. It was a different thing to tell a lie to the master and to tell a lie to any one else. The constitutional enmity which attached to his position, whereby he was the chastiser of faults and persecutor of indolence, was held also a justification of exceptional morals in the boy. The character of an enemy and the shield of an untruth against him went together; and when the hostile fiction was adopted, this result, upon a question of truth, was its natural consequence. But deceit toward a master was a local species of deceit. It did not enter into the general character, but was consistent with truth and openness to others. It followed a traditional casuistry, which confined itself to the school, and was cast off when the school was exchanged for general society and life.

Some sort of lying is, then, we find, attached to *esprit de corps* wherever it is excessive or undisciplined. It comes before us as a social thing. Men who carry on a piece of deceit together are bound and united together by it; if there is a tradition, a sentiment, an association of blood or tribe connected with it,—a religious cause involved in it, they are the more bound by it (*Note* 6). A lie is a sort of Roman sacramentum by which men devote themselves to a cause. They thereby enter into an engagement which commits

them to an extraordinary interest in a common object. A lie is regarded as a romantic offering to a party or cause. When it is made corporately and in common, by a number, it inspires them with the sense of a common sacrifice. Thus conspiracies are eminently social, and act as bonds of union; though these contracted unions break up, and are apt to turn to enmities. The *common* form of lying is then selfish and solitary; but another form of it is corporate and sympathetic. It witnesses to a strong attachment to a body. The clan and the tribe feel themselves consecrated by patriotic treachery achieved for their sake, and the public spirit of that age takes up deceit which studies effectiveness and aims vigorously at results. They see in deceit a power which gathers together resources, and brings combination to a head. The cause grows by the individual sacrifice, and the lie flatters the *esprit de corps*, and connects itself with sympathy for country and public ends.

When from these facts, connected with deceit and its place in the morals of mankind in the rude eras of secular history, we go to the act of Jael, the root of *esprit de corps* is not conspicuous at first; no crowd is near her to carry off the act as a popular one done for a whole nation or cause. She does it by herself. It is a solitary act. But it is plain, when we go into the circumstances, that this solitary act is done as really in defence of a whole people,—is as complete a sacrifice of herself to the Israelitish cause, and to a sacred party spirit,—as if it had been done with all Israel by. The act is upon the type of the deceit of early ages, it is

public-spirited, and strongly sympathetic. She has the whole religious cause and movement before her eyes. She is in intimate relations with Deborah and the leaders of Israel, and she knows she is conferring an enormous and incalculable benefit on the cause of Israel. The very lie which she tells for that cause, so far from being a solitary and unsocial act, has in it the most intense spirit of public life, and impersonates the whole animus of public partizanship.

Remarks such as these would naturally involve, did we follow them up, a general comparison of barbarism and civilisation, especially upon the subject of truthfulness and that class of virtues. We are in the first place apt to suppose that a rude age is as a matter of course a simple one; we imagine greater transparency and sincerity. But do facts agree? If there is anything with which human nature shows an early acquaintance, it is with the fact that on the subject of truth the faculty of speech is absolutely neutral, and ready to accommodate itself perfectly to either side. The whole apparatus of language fits in with a lie, and is entirely at its service; it is as ready an instrument for the use of falsehood as of truth. This is one of the first observations of experience. A lie is an instrument, a means to an end, and it possesses in an extraordinary degree the virtue of an instrument—great facility of appliance. A lie is in its very nature perfectly easy. It is produced by the simple powers of speech. The powers of speech are not in themselves allied specially to, nor have any

bias to, truth; the tongue obeys the will in either direction. If a person wishes to say what is not true, he can say it with absolute promptness. The state of things in the early ages shows a mind that made the largest use of such a liberty as this, and what followed from such an option being left to human discretion. (*Note* 7.)

The great principle in man which opposed lying was the idea of the individuality of man. His personality made him worthy of truth; but the general progress of man aided in that improvement. Doubtless civilisation has in it all that pampers human nature, that brings out his appetites and aims, and furnishes a rich feast; and whatever tempts human nature and makes it wish strongly, tempts it to lie—only regarding lying as means to an end, a mode of getting things it wants to get. But civilisation has much in it which is coercive of lying, and inducive to truth. It develops industry; people begin to recognise that labour is profitable; stated wages are an enlightening; regular avenues push aside irregular; respectable motives, honourable stimulus, and plain truth, compose a formidable phalanx. The system of trade, with its direct modes of return, makes everything understood, and shows off plain dealing at an advantage. The wheels and machinery of civilisation advance reputation as an inducement, and by bringing it within reach of all, give it new influence as a motive of action. Although, then, it is with a mixture, it aids the great law of truth and the

true idea of man. Distant views out of our range have an enchantment, and appeal to a poetical look; but we see the vast amount of real power which civilisation throws on the side of honesty and plain dealing.

LECTURE VIII.

THE LAW OF RETALIATION.

IF one had to describe shortly the defect of recent criticism upon the Old Testament, one would say that it did not make allowance for the necessities of a *progressive* revelation. The Jewish dispensation was a progressive revelation, *i.e.*, it did not promulgate at once what was absolutely true in religion or morals, but prepared people for it. But it was not only a progressive revelation which had its end and scope in the distant future, it was a progressive revelation which had also to legislate for the immediate present. That was a remarkable combination; it involved a peculiar relation of the Divine Instructor and Educator to His pupil; and it was the nucleus of the whole complex character of the old dispensation. That dispensation acted for an end; but legislation for the present was essential to its very object with reference to that end; essential to the very object of ultimate enlightenment. Could mere *teaching* have accomplished this end—a sort of standing lecture on sublime morals,—while the people in all other respects were left to themselves? In that case legislation would not have been wanted; but it is evident that mere teaching would not have

done. It would have flown over their heads to the last, without the nation ever becoming so far enlightened as to understand it. No; the people must be brought under the regular influence of a legislative code. This had alone a training and a moulding purpose. But legislation must be legislation for the present moment, and legislation in particulars, following all into their homes, and penetrating into their life. A people under Divine guidance for a future end must be placed under laws which operate *now*.

But such legislation—legislation under such conditions as these—involves immediately the principle of accommodation, on the part of the Perfect Legislator, to an existing imperfect moral standard in those for whom He legislates; because there is an interval between the superior and directing mind of the dispensation, and those who are the subjects of the dispensation, which can only be bridged over by such a Divine policy. The principle of accommodation, then, is necessary; but what and how much is it which is involved in a principle of accommodation? This is a question which will require some consideration.

There is plainly, then, in the first place, a permission involved in the principle of accommodation — a Divine permission — of an imperfect morality. God permits certain classes of actions which He would not permit in Christians; and it must be noted that He permits them in a very different sense from that in which He permits moral evil, as simply allowing it to take place in the world. Those who

do these actions are in *favour* with Him, are in covenant with Him, they are separated from all the nations of the earth to be His peculiar people, or holy nation. He accepts their sacrifices, answers their prayers, and has pleasure in their services.

So far we have got, as involved in the principle of accommodation; *i.e.*, to permission. But in truth, when we examine it in actual working, we find that the principle of accommodation cannot stop at permission. When a Divine dispensation takes up a rude and primitive people, it takes them up not only with a certain standard of what is allowable and may be done established among them, but also with certain strong ideas of what is right and ought to be done; certain vigorous notions of duty and of obligations, which exist indeed mixed with imperfections and extravagance in their mind, but which really involve moral principle, and which obviously constitute the goodness of the individual and society in that early stage of history. What is to be done then with these classes of actions? Is the Divine Lawgiver, the Divine standing Head and Ruler of the society, only to say of these actions—I *permit* them. That would be simply to relax a people's whole sense of moral obligation; it would be to release them from inaccurately and coarsely conceived high duties, before there was time for the growth of a correcter conception of them; and so their adoption into covenant by God would be a moral disadvantage to them instead of an improvement. It is not competent therefore to the Divine Legislator to use simply permissive language of these

popularly conceived duties; He must *command* them. He is bound to keep up the moral sense of the people to its present height, when He undertakes to raise it ultimately higher; He cannot alter therefore the *shall* of these duties into *may;* He cannot say, You *may* do these duties if you like, I will allow you to do them; that is not the language of a Lawgiver who has undertaken to keep up the existing moral obligations in a people. To discontinue these duties as injunctions, and exclude them from the express countenance and approval of the dispensation, would be to suppress at the very root the whole purpose of the dispensation. For how can it properly fulfil its object of correcting and improving the moral standard of men, unless it first maintains in obligation the standard which already exists? This is all it has to build upon. It must take the basis which is given to it; adopt the high and noble action of mankind, with its extravagance, roughness, and irregularity; and must first command and enjoin it, in the shape in which it stands, if it is ever to effect an improvement in it. Those rudely delineated conceptions of duty, which it intends ultimately to purify and raise, it must first impose. To take away from a Divine dispensation the right of thus dealing with imperfect materials, would in fact be to exclude the Divine Being from the government and direction of the world for any purpose of changing it for the better; for how can He act upon the hearts and understandings of men, how can He instruct and inform them, how can He regulate and elevate their moral estimate, except

through the medium of those moral ideas which then, at the time, exist in them; which must therefore be sustained in authority, in their defective phase, if they are ever to be raised to a more perfect one? To shut the Deity out of this sphere of imperfect perception and action, and to forbid Him to command upon this level, is to take man out of His jurisdiction as a being to be improved, and throw back human nature upon itself. And thus the office, once assumed by God, of legislating for a rude and primitive people with a view to their ultimate moral improvement, that office involves in its very nature both Divine permissions and Divine commands to do actions of imperfect morality.

1. Take, *e.g.*, the law of retaliation—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. It would be doing injustice to this law to regard it as simply legalising the right of private revenge; it embodies a principle of public justice, carried out in that form which justice has sometimes taken in early ages; viz., that a wanton assailant who inflicts an injury on the person of another should be punished by suffering a like hurt himself. This was doubtless an ancient consuetudinary law which was engrafted from a general Eastern stock upon the Mosaic code; and it was a law which, before legal courts penetrated into the recesses of society, was dispensed and executed by the wronged individual himself; who was charged with the double office of protecting society and defending himself; and who in one and the same act avenged himself and vindicated the rights of the community too. Retaliation then, in

this instance, was stimulated by the spirit of justice; for an injured man is not precluded from entertaining a public sense of justice in his indignation at that outrage which has affected himself. And therefore this rule of retaliation in the Mosaic Law is not to be interpreted as simply permissory; it has the nature of a precept and an injunction; a command to the persons to whom it was given to exert the right of punishing those who had wantonly harmed them, and making them smart for their insolence and brutality. It is a mistake to suppose that the *only* treatment which men want under open injuries, is checking and holding back from an excess of retaliation; undoubtedly, regarding man under one aspect it is; but there is a side of man's nature on which he is just as much a coward as he is a thirster for revenge on the other. Let us place ourselves in the age. There is, observable in many, a hanging back from doing justice even to themselves, under such circumstances; they are afraid of their injurer, and think that they may perhaps get yet worse from him than they have got; they see in his punishment only an incentive to another outrage, and conclude that the matter may as well rest where it is. A violent man who makes himself an object of terror in his neighbourhood, thus gains an impunity for his acts,—not from the forbearance but from the timidity of his victims. The precept in the Mosaic Law is opposed to this want of courage, and urges retaliation upon men as a duty due to justice. It imposes conditions indeed upon retaliation; and whereas the injured person is inclined,

when he once begins the work of vengeance, to carry it on beyond all bounds, and to overstep altogether the measure of the original injury, the law confines him to an *equal* harm.[1] Still the law enjoins retalia-

[1] The law of retaliation, which is to be found in the Hindu code, is framed in an entirely different spirit from that of Scripture. The idea of justice, which is an essential part of the Jewish law, is violated in the Hindu, as will be seen from the following extract from Professor Monier Williams' *Indian Wisdom*:—"The three most conspicuous features of his (Manu's) penal laws are exactly those which mark the earliest forms of criminal legislation,—viz., severity, inconsistency, and a belief in the supposed justice of the *lex talionis*, the latter leading to punishments which, in later times, would be considered unjustifiably disproportionate to the offences committed, and sometimes barbarously cruel. Thus:—

"With whatever member of the body a low-born man may injure a superior, that very member of his must be mutilated.

"A once-born man insulting twice-born men with abusive language must have his tongue cut out.

"Should he mention their name and caste with insulting expressions (as 'Hallo! there, Yaj na datta'—vilest of Brāhmans), a red-hot iron spike, ten fingers long, is to be thrust into his mouth.

"Should he, through arrogance, attempt to instruct a Brāhman in his duty (saying, You ought to do so and so), the king is to have boiling oil poured into his mouth and ears.

"Thieves are to have their hands cut off, and then to be impaled on a sharp stake.

"A goldsmith detected in committing frauds is to have his body cut in pieces with a razor.

"It will be observed that a graduated scale is prescribed, according to the rank of the offender, and the class to which he belongs. Thus:—

"A king must never kill a Brāhman, though he may be found guilty of all possible crimes; let him expel him from the kingdom unharmed in body, and intact in all his property. There is no greater injustice on earth than the killing of a Brāhman. The king therefore must not harbour a thought about putting him to death.

"A Kshatriya insulting a Brāhman must be fined one hundred panas; a Vaisya doing the same must pay one hundred and fifty or two hundred panas; a Sūdra doing the same must receive corporal punishment."—P. 273.

tion, and does not only permit it. "Thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."[1] And our Lord mentions retaliation among the injunctions of the Law, for He is speaking throughout this chapter —the fifth of St. Matthew—of rules and precepts, and not permissions. The law of retaliation was indeed a public law; and so far as the judge took the vengeance out of the hands of the individual, so far it became a judicial punishment simply; and the law alone is responsible for the penalty and not the individual. "But that such was the public enactment of the Mosaic Law," says Dean Alford, "implied a private spirit of retaliation, which should seek such redress; for the example (eye for eye, etc.) evidently refers to private as well as public retribution."[2] But this very private spirit of retaliation was at the same time enjoined in the Law, and not only permitted; was enjoined as being an imperfect form of proper retribution and justice.

The demand, however, of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, was the fruit of a very imperfect moral standard, and our Lord passes sentence on it accordingly, as a rule made obsolete by the rise of a higher law; and therefore this is an instance in which we see the Almighty, in the Mosaic Law, not only allowing but enjoining and commending an act of imperfect morality. The Divine Legislator takes up the idea of justice which belongs to the age, and sustains it in authority, *i.e.*, lays it down as a

[1] Deut. xix. 21. [2] Greek Test., note on Matt. v.

precept, until the mind of the people is equal to a higher law.

2. Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. The latter part of this precept—Thou shalt hate thine enemy—nowhere occurs in so many words in the Mosaic Law; the whole precept, however, as it stands, undoubtedly represents, and is a summary of, the sense of the Law; nor is there any occasion, as some commentators do, to distinguish the object of our Lord's prefix—"Ye have heard that it hath been said,"—as it applies to the first part of this precept, and as it applies to the second; to refer it to the Law in the case of "Love thy neighbour," and to the traditions of the scribes in the case of "Hate thine enemy." All the other precepts which our Lord takes as instances of an inferior morality which the Gospel puts aside, are precepts out of the law, and there is no reason to distinguish this particular one from the rest with respect to its source. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy," is the same form of expression as "Ye shall be perfect."

This precept applies, in the first place, to the neighbour and the enemy in a public and national sense; the neighbour was the Israelite, the enemy was he who was not the Israelite,—the Moabite, the Edomite, the Ammonite, the Philistine.[1] This is a definition of a neighbour and an enemy which belongs especially to an early stage of society, before smaller nations and tribes were collected under large monarchies, and the different materials welded together by a central power,

[1] Ps. lxxxiii. 6, 7, 9, 10.

and penetrated by the force of a higher common sovereignty, bringing them into a political union under one head. The precept implies a primitive state of mutual animosity, and frequent wars; the necessary accompaniment of the fact that the nations were close to one another, and yet two; and in this state of things the Israelites are to love Israelites, and to hate Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, and Philistines. Simply looking upon this precept, then, in its working upon national feeling, we see that it is addressed to an early age of the world; but that, together with the accommodation which there is in it to the *division* of that age, it also tends to strengthen and compact the *union* of that age. In that early stage of human progress, what there was of union in different quarters was powerfully developed and built up by *contrast*—the particular state or nation being made to feel *unity* by the opposition of *separation;* its own *concord* by the mark of its *division* from those around it. This keen sensation of disunion with others not only prevented its own union from splitting up, but actually promoted and increased it; the inward forces of the state were the more amalgamated and gathered up, and all its elements brought into closer agreement. In a word, this precept was, in a national sense, the inculcation of an *esprit de corps,* which was the very bond of and incentive to union in the early ages, and that upon which the world depended for its advance to more regular and wider grounds of union. We see now traces of the same character in the social sphere, in those who combine the virtues and the defects of

earlier times, and are the most generous friends, and at the same time, as we say, good haters. This precept was therefore an accommodation to an imperfect morality. Taking the early *esprit de corps* as a whole, with its unity and its division, it engendered a principal of national union,—the best of which the age was capable. And when we add that to the Jew the foreigner was also a heathen and a stranger to the Covenant, the precept assumes not a national but a religious character, and becomes a direction to the people, in the only popular form which the spirit of the age allowed, to stand by their religion, and keep up the strong sense of their superiority as being God's people; and of the hatefulness of the religion of the heathen. The Jew undoubtedly exceeded the force of the precept in the actual relation in which he put himself toward the rest of mankind, and in the temper which he brought himself to—"in that hatred of the human race, and enmity to all the rest of the world," which Tacitus, in the well-known passage notices, and which he describes the Jews as combining "with compassion toward each other."[1] There was an obstinate virulence and morbid moroseness in the actual temper of the Jews, contracted by habit and education, and the artificial creation of their schools, for which the precept is not responsible; but the precept itself still inculcated that generous form of enmity to outsiders which was the natural accompaniment in early times of love of your own body.

[1] "Apud ipsos fides obstinata misericordia in promptu sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium."—Tac. *Hist.* v. 5, 2.

But the enemy is not always in Scripture a foreigner, a heathen, or one out of the Covenant. Any one who reads Scripture will be struck with the definite mention of the enemy as an individual. Your enemy is what may be called a character in Scripture; he has a regular place; there are exhortations given respecting him, and he is a known subject of treatment. He is a persecutor, a foe to religion; but a personal enemy too, who seeks after your soul to destroy it; he is full of cunning, deceit, and fraud; under his tongue is ungodliness and vanity; he is inspired with hatred and cunning, and these are directed against a personal object. Saul was the enemy of David, but so far from being a foreigner and a heathen, he was a Jewish king, and his own father-in-law. Doeg and Ahithophel, against whom David utters strong imprecations in the Psalms, were personal enemies of the deepest type; wily and malignant plotters, bent on undermining David in the kingdom, and seeking his life. It is impossible that a mere foreigner or heathen, as such, should be the object of the feelings sometimes described in the Old Testament toward an "enemy;" after all, foreigners and heathen, as such, are not real persons at all; they are mere representative persons, mere abstractions; they must be real persons, who are hated in that sense in which hatred of an enemy is sometimes understood and delineated in Scripture.[1]

[1] The Law is pervaded by great rules and precepts, which form its leading principles. Retaliation is one leading view of the Law; that pain and adversity are the test of the Divine displeasure, prosperity and

It must be observed indeed that the "enemy" continues to have his place in the Gospel; though a distinct set of maxims and a different mode of treatment are applied to him. He is a recognised person, however, there; and even the substitution of "love" for "hatred" toward him, still treats him as an existing personage, and a definite personage, who is known to another and whom his object is conscious of. This personage, under a later system, does not exert the violence and the force which he did in the Jewish; he does not seek a man's life. If his character is to be summarily described, he is a determined ill-wisher; his heart is radically affected hostilely toward another; the whole spring of his wishes is turned against him; he wishes him ill-success, failure, disappointment. It is this evil-wishing which constitutes mainly an enemy; of course he may do actual harm; but an habitual evil wish is in itself an injury to another,—an injury to his peace which he has to surmount. Malice, however, does not stand alone in a man. It produces meanness. A man

happiness the mark of God's good will is another leading view. But this is compatible with single texts and isolated precepts on a different principle; and Scripture, when it gives the main place in it to one rule, may occasionally anticipate the higher Gospel standard. Thus, the Law reveals the rule of justice as one of retaliation; and at the same time Job says (chap. xxxi. 29),—"If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him: neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul."

Thus, the Law reveals the rule of God's infliction of pain or punishment as proceeding from His anger, and the prosperity of man as being the expression of His love; and at the same time Scripture says (Prov. iii. 12), "For whom the Lord loveth He correcteth."

finds he cannot gratify it by open ways, and he is forced upon underhand and secret ones. Thus he slides in part into the character of the Jewish "enemy," though a milder form of the character. The Gospel, I say, recognises an habitual enmity, of which the object is an individual. One would suppose, from the way in which some men talk, that there were no such thing now as hating *persons*, or that it were confined to a rude class in society; that it was a barbarous and obsolete temper; and that now only principles were hated, and persons only in their abstract character as representing sets of principles. There could not be a greater mistake, and the Gospel takes notice of the rude fact of personal enmity as a real thing; *i.e.*, of a state of feeling in a man towards another, which springs in him, in the first instance, toward the person. The individual is the goal and terminus of the feeling. For this there are selfish, or proud, or jealous reasons; but it is often very mysterious how this feeling toward another arises. We talk of animal nature in respect of sensuality, but it would almost seem as if there were such a thing as animal nature in respect of irrational causeless malignity; a hostile spirit to this or that person, which is not accounted for in any cause which appeals to a strictly rational nature; and, however concealed under the usual refinements of civilisation, that such a state of mind were a shooting up of an old low and wild instinct not amenable to reason; —an irrational part of the man which acts antagonistically, and is excited without anything properly to account for it; so much does the effect outrun any

intelligible motive which the facts of the case can supply. Among schoolboys, whose natures act with a rough openness, an animal propensity to hatred may be observed, and one boy singles out another for persistent bullying without any assignable cause. Among men such a source of enmity will be disguised, but it exists in their case, and they too act from subtle and secret irrational magnetism of enmity toward particular persons, though this of course does not excuse it. For persons to fall back upon a lower and base nature, is a vileness; reason should raise them above it. True reason is loving. It says to itself, Why should I hate this man? what reason is there? True reason is kind, humane; but there is a carnal abyss in man which is not under law, out of which the hostile mind comes, that, if it have not got an object, makes one. It is quite mysterious, sometimes, the way in which an "enemy" rises up in a circle; the first overt sign is far from the first commencement of him; he has had a secret growth before. Sometimes the subtlest and keenest form of enmity springs out of a previous friendship, which only disclosed and extracted the contrarieties in the persons' characters too accurately, and made them know each other too well.

But, however we may explain him, an enemy is a grave thing;—some one who has singled another out for evil wishes; Scripture speaks of him therefore always with gravity, as if it were a serious thought to any one; while the "enemy" is made to stand out a defined personage, and Scripture lays its finger on him. We value our friends' good wishes,

indeed, more than anything they really do for us; they are the most precious part of them; the ill-wisher, therefore, is the most opposite to nature, and stands out as an evil prodigy. He does in substance what the "enemy" in Scripture does, who is represented as cursing; for cursing is in substance evil-wishing, and it is, as such, invested with so dark a character in Scripture. There is, indeed, if one thinks of it, something dreadful in people wishing, keenly, as a punishment, out of malice to another, what in the Divine dispensation of chastenings is designed as his blessing. Nor is there anything so immovable, after it has once got a certain hold of the mind, as a personal enmity; nothing lessens it; the person himself who is the object of it may change ever so much, it makes no difference; the feeling has once attached itself to him—that person—and there it clings. There is an obstinate depreciation which is just the same. Nor do any outward civilities and forms of kindness on the part of the entertainer of the feeling himself at all affect it; it goes untouched through them all. We naturally at first connect contingency with persons, and stability with principles; yet a man will change what he calls his principles half a dozen times in his life; yet hardly ever change a personal enmity. His lower nature is more fixed than his higher intellectual nature.

A man's enemy was all this under the old law, but he was more, in proportion to the less restraint which a less spiritual system threw upon him. Under the Gospel, as the highest spiritual law, the enemy can

not profess his enmity, and so is compelled to hide it in the corner of his heart, where it takes the form of ill wishes, and permanent ill wishes; but still is obliged, by the spiritual nature of the law which the man professes, to abstain from active demonstration. This is indeed often a worse state of the individual man than his state under the Law; because it is of the nature of hatred, as of other evil, to become intenser under concealment; and when a man is forced by the height of the system he outwardly owns to fall back upon hypocrisy, he not only acts as a hypocrite in concealing his bad state of mind, but his state of mind becomes worse by being concealed. The passion of enmity becomes deeper and stronger. And doubtless this peculiar result of Christianity, where it drives evil deeper into a man's heart instead of freeing him from the yoke, and roots it instead of extracting, is anticipated in that remarkable text, where the evil spirit is described as restored in all the greater power after his downfall—"Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first" (Matt. xii. 44). But under the old law a man's enemy of course stood in more than the position of an ill-wisher to him; he was emphatically a dangerous man, and was ready any day to do him real mischief, and indeed he might even take away his life.

With respect, then, to this more private type of enemy, the rule of the old law—Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy—was conceived in the general spirit of the law of retaliation; and the "enemy" came under the action of that general law; he was only an habitual foe, instead of one for the occasion: and the precept to hate your enemy, was, like that of retaliation, in its spirit judicial; though it aimed at justice through a personal medium, *i.e.*, through the redress of your own wrongs. It was the justice of an earlier age of society, when the scope of the individual and that of the state were not so clearly distinguished; and a high form of personal vengeance mingled with the principle of public justice so intimately, that they could not be wholly separated;—for it must be always remembered that the precept assumes that the enemy is in the wrong and that you are in the right. To a certain extent, then, it was right that these bad natures that infested society, and, by fastening upon individuals who lived under their plots and menaces, were really the foes of the community, should be met by the courage of those whom they harassed and troubled; and not only a permission but a command to the sufferer to retaliate upon them was wanted. Because, as we have said, it is by no means true to say universally that men did not want a command to defend themselves, but would do it unprompted; and that only a *check* upon retribution was needed. Many of the quieter sort, who stood in fear of bold and unscrupulous men, might shrink from provoking even by just

acts of retaliation further animosity, and would require an injunction to retaliate, rather than a restraint upon their retribution. On the other hand, it is evident that a precept which did not accurately distinguish between a public enemy and a private, and allowed resentment to act only upon a vague, though honest impression of its own right and justice, was a precept of imperfect morality; and such retaliation was constantly exposed to error, passion, and excess. The Divine Legislator therefore in this instance took up the justice of the age, that which was the highest and most genuine and effective form of it at the time; and inserted it as a rule and precept in His own code for the Jewish nation.

The precept, however, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy, had a still deeper signification, and involved a more inward and sacred class of feelings, when the "enemy" was specially identified with the enemy of God—a man opposed to the spread of the Kingdom of God upon earth. In the case of David, inasmuch as his public and personal foes are the same men; and those who wish him ill also wish ill to Zion, and are set against the establishment of a religious kingdom of Israel, his personal enemies are thus identified with God's enemies; and this combination produces the powerful and awful damnatory expressions which we meet with in the Psalms. The precept, when its terms are taken with this religious light thrown upon them, is simply to say—Thou shalt love the good and hate the bad. But such a precept, though it bears a good Gospel

sense, was not understood exactly in the same way under the Law, in which it is under the Gospel. Under the old dispensation, when a saint of God obeyed this command, and hated his enemy in the sense of the enemy of God,—the bad man who has taken his side against God's kingdom,—he understood that injunction in the sense of wishing his enemy from the very depth of his heart the deprivation of all worldly good. The old Law was a system of temporal rewards and punishments. Under it, therefore, the sunshine of prosperity was identified with God's favour; and it was an incongruity and an impiety, a frightful reversal of rule and order,—though it could not be denied that it did occasionally happen,—that the wicked should enjoy the light of God's countenance, as this life's happiness seemed to be. It was confusion; it was a dreadful contradiction and discord. The saint of the old Law, therefore, cursed the enemy of God; and that was the way in which David understood and acted on the precept to hate his enemy. For the righteous, then, was sprung up a light, a joyful gladness for such as were true-hearted; they ate, and were satisfied; they sang praises unto the Lord, and lacked nothing. But as to the enemy of God, David prayed that he might wander upon the face of the earth an outlaw and an outcast. He called down upon him all the pains, and every ignominy, that can afflict a man. Let cursing happen unto him, let blessing be far from him; may he be condemned in the court, and may Satan be his judge; may he lose all that he has, his prayer be rejected, the extortioner grind him, and

the stranger supplant him; let misery be unto him as the cloak that he hath upon him, and as the girdle that he is girded withal; let his life be cut short, and his name perish. The imprecation extended to the posterity,—that they should be vagabonds and beggars, desolate, homeless, and fatherless, and no man even to pity them. Hatred of the enemy of God thus filled the full and terrible measure of the old Law; it was conceived in the spirit of the anomalous and romantic justice of the older religious type, which combined temporal punishment of sin with the inclusion of the children in the guilt of sin; which overwhelmed the whole family in one collective destruction with its head; and in the sentence upon crime did not distinguish personality. But the new code changed all. Christian hatred of the enemy of God both discarded the test of temporal punishment, and distinguished personality. The bad man might be prosperous in this world, and his children were not involved in his guilt. He only was guilty and deserved punishment; and that punishment was the act of God's future justice, and belonged to the eternal world. The Christian could not pray for his temporal misfortune and misery.

LECTURE IX.

RETALIATION: LAW OF GOEL.

IN treating the law of retaliation I have reserved for separate consideration the case of the Avenger of Blood, under the Law of Goel, as the most conspicuous example of the retaliation enjoined in the Mosaic code. Here is an instance of an unwritten law of the East which was incorporated in the Mosaic dispensation:—as the new conditions which were annexed to it, and by which it was partially modified, show. The act of the Goel (*Note* 8), therefore, was in its radical motive an act of genuine and serious justice, it was an act of high religious retribution, and piety to the dead; it was therefore at the root a moral act; at the same time it was an act of imperfect morality, because this unwritten law plainly obliged the avenger of blood to pursue and kill without full knowledge of the facts of the case; which in many cases, in the absence of all public forms of justice and regular courts, he could not possibly learn. "No such investigation is ever thought of by the blood-avenger," says Michaelis,[1] "before he sets out on his pursuit, nor has he indeed any opportunity of making it, because those who are suspected will not present themselves before his tribunal

[1] *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*, Book iii. Art. 133.

to abide a trial of their guilt or innocence. He must therefore follow mere report, or what those to whom he gives credit tell him; and this, too, he does under the influence of passion." So very loose, so indiscriminating, and so wild, was the justice of the law of Goel. If a man killed another by accident, or if he killed him even in self-defence, the law allowed for neither of these reasons for the homicide; but gave the blood-avenger the full right to his life, could he discover and overtake him, the same that he would have had to that of a deliberate murderer:—a right which he was obliged to exercise by the law of Goel itself, and by the popular code of honour which enforced the law; which was so stringent and imperious that no man could leave his relation unavenged without indelible disgrace.

Such being the rule of Goel, this consuetudinal law or command was adopted by the Divine Lawgiver at the institution of the Mosaic code, and incorporated into the judicial or criminal law of the Jewish nation. The command of old legal custom was continued and maintained by the sanction of the Mosaic Law; and the people of God in obeying the rule of Goel obeyed a rule which they received from the same authority from which they received the rest of their law;—an authority, indeed, which had not founded the rule, but had, upon finding it, adopted it. Those who killed another either accidentally or in self-defence, had indeed a right to the permanent shelter of the cities of refuge, to which the wilful murderer had not; but up to the gates of the legal sanctuary the avenger had full

rights under the Jewish law over both,—both wil murderer and killer by accident—and he was as much bound to claim those rights, within the limits to which they were subjected under a restrained law of Goel, as he would have been to exercise them under an unrestricted law. A check was placed by Moses upon the operation of the old consuetudinary law; but before it reached that check the law was as imperative as ever, and the avenger of blood was under a full command to pursue the manslayer, and if he caught him to take his life. There was nothing optional in the course marked out for the avenger of blood under the Jewish Law; the pursuit, with its issue, should it be fatal or not, was prescribed and enjoined upon him; and the Mosaic Law in incorporating the law of Goel deprived it of none of its stringency within the limits within which it acted. To have inserted the rule of Goel as an optional one indeed in the Mosaic code,—which people might observe if they pleased, but which was not obligatory upon them,—would be an impossible step for us to suppose the Divine Lawgiver to have taken; its very incorporation in the Jewish Law is a guarantee for the sense in which it is incorporated, viz. not as a permission, but as a command. What it was lawful for the avenger of blood to do, that he must do. The law of Goel, then, as adopted into the Mosaic Law, is an instance of a Divine command enjoining and enforcing acts of imperfect justice and morality, in those early times, as distinguished from merely permitting them or conniving at them. It was an instance in which God

acted through the medium of the moral standard of the age, gave commands accommodated to that medium, and imposed as obligatory upon people proceedings characterised by that imperfect morality.

Many critics on the Old Testament morality would indeed set down the law of Goel as almost entirely inspired by bloodthirsty vengeance; and they have a notion of the voracious relish of revenge as being able to account for anything in the way of trouble, peril, or difficulty, which is undertaken in the case of this law; that it is a motive which requires no addition, and which entirely extinguishes, and makes people not reckon and hardly perceive, any combination of labour and pain which they have to surmount in satisfying it. This would be their whole notion of the law of Goel, and they would dismiss it with this round description of it. Now this may be the case in some kinds of revenge, in such as are strictly personal, when, *e.g.*, the individual writhes under the sting of some studied insult, or some violent wrong which has been inflicted upon himself. But I apprehend that it makes a considerable difference in the impetuosity of vengeance whether it is for a wrong that has happened to a man's self, or for a wrong that has happened to another person. To revenge another person's wrong is a very different thing from revenging your own. To be in a high state of indignation about what has happened to another person, and to feel the extremity of torture and disquiet until you have avenged him, is, at any rate, a condition of mind in advance upon the ordinary motive of revenge. In the present case the wrong *has*

happened to another person. Another person has been killed by somebody. But to go off in pursuit of somebody in consequence,—to commit yourself to a long search after somebody, over rivers, across deserts, through forests, marshes, morasses, and quagmires, up mountains and steeps, down perilous descents, by edges of precipices, under burning suns, with chance scraps of food, and without any certain prognostications of the issue, whether it may not be worse for the pursuer than for the pursued,—this would hardly be reckoned generally a convenient, desirable, and gratifying piece of business to execute. It was a considerable task to impose upon a man. Under any circumstances the pursuit would be a good deal of trouble; it involves breaking away from his family, his business, the satisfying routine of the day, the settled duties and comforts of his ordinary life. But it is for one near of kin; and does not that consideration inspire the keenest ardour against wrong, and kindle the most burning appetite for revenge? Would it not wholly suppress and annihilate every counter wish, and every selfish hesitation? But do relations invariably impress their memories upon their survivors with that powerful sweetness which makes all labours in defence and vindication of them, rewards, and all weariness delight? The law of Goel does not discriminate in this respect. The nearest of kin must avenge the near of kin. He may have been a very distant relation, and he may have been by no means one who had acquired the key to his affections; but the law is rigid, is imperative; he cannot hang back;

to stay behind and let the criminal make good his escape, is irrecoverable infamy and degradation, to the nearest of kin. He must start off then in pursuit.

But it needs no strong penetration to see that there must come under the operation of this law a great number of instances in which the law was by no means felt by the person who had to carry it into execution as putting him in an eligible situation. There must have been many instances in which the *ex officio* avenger would not,—had the sanctity of custom and the obligations of honour allowed him,—have obstinately grasped at his official privilege and distinction. You picture him to yourself always furiously stimulated by the passion of vengeance; and the hot pursuit as a pure gratification to the avenger; but does your experience of human nature indicate that men of themselves would invariably take the violent death of a relation so deeply to heart that they would go to the ends of the earth to revenge it? They would all desire justice no doubt—but would they all go off on a knight-errant expedition to get it? There must have been a great many avengers of blood who in their hearts would have tolerated, without absolute despair, a temporary sleep of justice. Popular opinion obliged them to rush hot upon the pursuit, and nothing but an immediate chase would be suffered; but had the avenger been allowed to consult an easy and accommodating disposition rather than a stern law, might not a much slighter investigation into the matter sometimes have satisfied him? After all, human nature, without some—more than hint—some coercion from

the fount of law, is not morosely and inexorably faithful to the rights of the dead. Out of sight out of mind. The gap which even violence creates is soon filled by the rolling tide of life; and even justice acquiesces and subsides under the pressure of fresh facts. Enough perhaps has been done, and the matter might as well rest. Inquiry cannot go on for ever—*ne quid nimis:* justice may be over rigid, and demand more than can be done for her. With such reflections as these, the thirst for vengeance cools in the reflecting breast of the avenger of blood; and he contents himself with the ordinary double office of the nearest of kin and heir; which is, to give his departed relative a solemn and imposing funeral, and to enter upon the enjoyment of his estate.

Indeed, if we throw ourselves back upon very early times, and contemplate the situation in which justice was placed in the case of a violent death, we shall see that it was a state of things, the necessities of which it was by no means easy to meet. In a civilised age this is all arranged for us, and we have nothing to do but to use the means at hand: the police finds out the murderer, a prison holds him, and the court tries him. But in that primordial age, in which there were neither police, prisons, nor courts, and yet there was a sense of justice in the world, what action was to be taken? Undoubtedly it is everybody's interest in general to avenge a murder, but it is not enough to acknowledge that; something must be done now, immediately: while at the same time the murderer is off, gone nobody knows where.

Imagine then a time before there was any institution of Goel,—which armed a particular person with authority for the occasion, and put the law into his hands,—and justice is reduced indeed to a great strait; it is not able to do anything simply for want of an executive; there is no authorised officer of justice; there is no staff to start with. In this perplexity, then, a disposition arises to found some primordial apparatus of justice. But the rude ages of the world, in this very commencement of the work of administering justice, are disposed to take decided advantage of the difficulties of justice. It would be by no means true to say that rude and violent ages were entirely destitute of a certain kind of moderate tactics;—an accommodating temper in particular emergencies; a disinclination to pushing matters to extremes, and a partiality for compromises. Savage people take a practical view of things in their own way; they do not look far before them; or think of adopting any course which will be *ultimately* and on a *large scale* beneficial, at the *cost* of some temporary inconvenience; but they have a notion of a convenient settlement and arrangement for the moment. In coming to deal, then, with the subject of violent deaths, a view of a practical kind rose up in rude ages, which, if there had been any need to do so, would have expressed itself in the case of a murder somewhat in this way:—"This is a bad business, but another death does not mend it. Let us come to a sensible understanding about the matter. One thing is certain; whatever we do now that he is gone, we cannot bring him back again. The

gates of death have closed over our friend, and he is where we cannot get at him; we cannot bring *him* to life again by any blood that we may shed. To kill another man, then, cannot do him any good: it cannot do us any good. But the infliction of a heavy fine upon the offender promises to be a really useful punishment; it is a retribution upon him, it is a benefit to us;—not an equivalent, indeed, for the great blow which has fallen upon us, which is not to be expected, but a rectification so far as the case admits of it. On the whole, and all circumstances considered, perhaps the best compensation to enforce for our irreparable loss is a good round sum." Something of this kind of reasoning would seem to have founded the money-compensation for homicide, which rose up among the Hindoos and among the Germans, with whom, Tacitus remarks—"*Luitur homicidium certo armentorum ac pecorum numero.*"[1]

But it is obvious that such a judicial arrangement as this, though it avoided the blind bloodshed of the law of Goel, its striking at the first person that offered, and killing the wrong man, if it so happened, or mistaking his crime, could never have sown the seed of civilised justice. For regular justice the retributive principle was necessary, and death for death was the only way of meeting murder; the only solid preventive of it. In however rude and uncertain a form, then, the law of Goel was the true germ of civilised justice, which, sanguinary for the moment, seized hold of the true judicial scope

[1] *Germ.* 21.

of security for the future; and by the terror of death protected human life. The fine was no help against violence to come; and, as Michaelis observes—"The poor man has little security for his life against the rich, because the latter has the means of averting retaliation, by persuading the poor man's relations, which will seldom be a very difficult matter, to accept of money in lieu of blood."[1] The fine was an oblique and distorted aim to begin with. But the institution of Goel caught up the first movement of genuine justice and indignation at wrong, gave it its swing, and put the case in *its* hand. With all its hazard and haste, it still contemplated as its object the simple punishment of crime. The judicial aim was true, but acting under the greatest difficulties with respect to evidence, and obliged to take up with the first *prima facie* indications of the criminal, and the quality of the crime. A true aim, however, once rooted, gradually cleared a way for its own execution; it built up the necessary structure of police, courts, and witnesses, and raised up the edifice of civilised justice. And thus the Jewish Law, in adopting the institution of Goel, imposed and enjoined an imperfect form of justice, which, as acting under defect of evidence, was rash and precipitate, but still acted as the basis and commencement of a regular civil justice. The law of Goel was, at any rate, a law which severed human nature from its lethargy and indifference. With all its extravagance and looseness, it compelled men to acknowledge the claims of the dead, to avenge their

[1] Book iii. Art. 134.

wrongs, and to punish the wrong-doer. And a law, with such a root of nobility and justice in it, was not unfit for adoption, as a temporary curb upon human nature, till it could admit of a higher discipline by the Divine Lawgiver, whose necessary policy, when He gave laws to unenlightened man, was accommodation.

So again with respect to the principle of wholesale justice,—the subject of a previous Lecture,—which included the family in the guilt of the criminal himself, and the *whole* of a people or nation, the children with the rest, in the guilt of the sinning and predominant part of the nation; this was also an instance of a rude imperfect justice, deeply seated in the early retributive impulse and sentiment of mankind, which was adopted by God in His leadership of the Jewish nation in its hostile career against other nations. The Israelites were commanded by God to put that principle in practice against particular nations; and therefore, in these cases, God commanded acts of an imperfect morality. But such a course of Divine conduct is upon no reasonable principle liable to objection. A rude imperfect sort of justice being at that time the idea of justice which mankind had, and that being the shape which the principle of justice assumed in their minds, to lay it down that God was not to regulate the execution of that imperfect law of justice,—and command the application of it to one nation as distinguished from another nation,—according as it agreed with His great design regarding the Jewish people, would be an untenable and unreasonable position. How can we exclude it from the scope

of His Providence, such being the justice of that age of the world, to direct that justice into its proper channel; and to put it into men's hearts by extraordinary signs and tokens, to inflict it upon this person rather than that person, upon this family or nation rather than upon that; and to watch over, and superintend administration of, an unframed and sanguinary but still sacred law of retribution? Adopting, for the sake of argument, the theory of the Quakers, and supposing all war to be wrong, could we still pronounce that war did not come under the active providence of God; and that it was not within its province to cause certain wars to be made, and to suggest and give occasion for the undertaking of some wars rather than of others, according as the interests of society or religion might require? To exclude in this way all moral patterns from the Divine recognition, except the perfect one, would be simply to shut God out of the direction of His own world; because in such direction God must deal with man as he is, and prompt him to do, and impart to him the will to do, good actions, according to the type and measure of goodness to which his understanding in each age is confined. Is it an awful solemnity then of retributive justice that God commits to the agency of man? It must necessarily be a justice of the type then acknowledged in the world; and it must be a justice of the *excessive type*, if the occasion is extraordinary. To command *justice*, and to command that *pattern* of justice, is therefore in fact the *same thing;* because, for the very purpose of justice itself, it was necessary that it should be a justice

which man could understand, and this excessive type of justice was what he understood as justice.

This idea, as has been said, was not connected with cruel or inhuman motives in the minds of those who held it. There was no malice in it, no delight in pain, no love of destruction for its own sake; it was at the root a genuine sense of retributive justice, only not regulated by the strict sense of human individuality. Was this sense of justice, then, no proper subject of Divine regulation and direction? God cannot indeed sanction the audacity of a fanatic, who takes up and revives the error of earlier justice after the enlightened conscience of man has cast it aside; for that which is imperfection before the illumination is sin against light after it. And this distinction will exclude from that religious shelter many notorious acts of enthusiasts in later times, as well as some mistaken courses of policy into which the Christian mind has been misled. But an imperfect idea of justice, so long as it is only imperfection, and belongs to the earlier state of man before he has advanced in the path of truth, is moral at the root. Do we exclude it from the Divine recognition, as if God could not direct it without violating His own moral nature? We are not fair to this early idea of justice. It was a sacred, a strong moral idea—struggling with confusion and mistakes, carried off by false lights, and entangled in an intricacy of unformed thought, which perplexed the idea of human personality. We can hardly unthread now this labyrinth, and clear up those curious substitutions and transferences of identity, which are like the

reasonings of a man in a dream; or get at the sense of those early snares and mazes in which reason was caught, and those forms of thinking to which she bent herself with such flexibility, accepting their impress and the chain of habit. Yet this was vehement early justice, enveloped as it was, like some strong animal, in a net by its own very force and impetuosity. Do not take a police court to judge it by. Throw yourself back into the first ages of the world, look at its serious, its profound sense of retribution, so full of fear and awe, working itself into shape, extricating itself out of its meshes, and clearing its ground gradually out of haze and darkness; and you will be able, with all its wildness, to respect early justice. It was that excess which made a foundation for the mean; a mere defect and want of the passion would have been a barren spring.

God then directed into particular channels, He applied to the Canaanites, He applied to the families of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, He applied to the family of Achan, He applied to the family of Saul, a kind of justice which was the recognised justice of that age, which formed a prominent feature of the civil law of the age, and which the ancient Jewish people maintained with the rest of the world; only with the qualification that it did not enter into their regular body of law, but awaited special Divine commands. That was the justice of the day, and that was the justice by which the first period of the world marked its sense of good and evil. The exclusion of such would have been unintelligible to the age, as that

form of justice was then the natural bulwark of Divine law.

Divine commands, then, we see, no more in reality compromise the moral nature of the Deity than permissions do. On the one hand, He can no more permit, in the sense of sanctioning, positive wickedness, than He can command it; while, on the other, He can command imperfectly right actions as much as He can permit them. But if these commands were accommodations to early justice, they at the same time directed and applied it to great ends,—to marking great sins, and so to impressing the Jewish people with a sense of the heinousness of such sins. How strongly could a judicious and sagacious man of the world argue for the right which he had,—and had found it expedient to exercise,—of communicating a piece of knowledge in that shape in which an inferior mind could receive it, but which was not itself the absolute truth! How sensibly he would demonstrate the unavoidableness of such a course; with what solid force would he state the duty to give another so much truth as he was capable of taking in, when the narrow capacity of the recipient precluded the communication of the whole; and with what discrimination would he vindicate the distinction between pure error and partial truth! Now the case of moral practice is quite analogous to that of truth. Yet the man who can see so clearly the legitimacy of accommodation in his own case, when he comes to the case of the Divine Legislator, refuses to allow in Him any condescension to unenlightened men; and incloses the Deity in a network of casuistry

which precludes Him from acting in His own world. On this rule what man is incapable of receiving must on that very account be given him; and God can command nothing but what is perfect, while man can only receive what is defective. What is an impracticable procedure is thus alone a right one; whatever is *possible* for man's guidance is wrong. Imprisoned in this inextricable dilemma, the Deity is thus precluded from dealing with His own world, and from taking the only course which can be taken for educating man; that of sustaining an imperfect standard before he can be raised to a perfect one. But this is to impose on the Deity a scrupulous and fantastic morality which rational persons reject for their own conduct; and to make that a law to God which is fanaticism for man.

St. Augustine, when he came to the question of Scripture criticism, upon moral grounds, adopted this great principle—that which Scripture gives us, viz. that God commands according to the state of mind of the recipient of the command. Is he in a perverse or a mutinous and obstinate state? The command then becomes *hostile* to him by the very leaning and favour it shows to his wickedness. Is he simply in an ignorant state of mind following the standard of the day? The command, then, is not hostile, but only pitying and condescending. It tells him to do what he is equal to; what is the best thing he can do under the circumstances. But still it is the same principle kept up: the command follows the state of mind. God ordinarily commands a sinner to do something right, though He knows he will disobey Him; but He

reserves to Himself the right, if He think good, to command him in judgment; and, if he has put himself by his previous conduct out of the sphere of discipline and instruction, to do what is wrong. And still more when, in consequence of his imperfect knowledge of right, it is necessary that he should be imperfectly commanded, does God give imperfect commands.

Divines and commentators on Scripture have thus sometimes erred, when they come to a difficulty in morals in Scripture, in placing the defence of the act criticised entirely upon the strength of a positive command of God, without at the same time any reference to the state of mind of the agent. Thus Calvin defends the spoiling of the Egyptians simply as having been commanded by God:—the whole world, and all that is in it, is God's property, and He can give it to whom He pleases; and from the time of the donation it ceases to be the property of him to whom it has hitherto belonged, and becomes the property of the person into whose hands it has been transferred. But although this is in the abstract undeniably true, the mind of a man who was commanded to steal another man's goods would be divided as to whether it *was* a Divine command;—because there would be a miraculous argument one way and a moral argument another, —*unless* his moral state of mind were of itself an imperfect one. The command might be given, but it would only be obeyed if the mind itself acquiesced in the robbery from a defect of its own; or from the wild and irregular standard which it had naturally got from the age, and from the circumstances of the

world. The defence implies a certain laxer sense of theft and standard of property in the person, due to the fault of his age rather than his own, and does not rest upon a Divine command alone. Calvin's defence, then, of the act of the Israelites is artificial, and wants natural strength. Theodoret is more natural, and expresses a sense of irregular and loose justice when he says that what they stole from the Egyptians at going, was only a return for the unpaid labour they spent in building the Pyramids. Tertullian says that it was only a small compensation in reality for the work of the Israelites. Chrysostom says it was a belligerent right; Israel had a right to make war upon Egypt for great wrongs. These explanations all point to a moral vindication, upon a ground of such popular justice as was thought to be justice at that day, rather than to a ground of positive Divine authority proved by miraculous intervention.

The objection, indeed, which is felt to the Deity, in the spirit of accommodation, *commanding* classes of actions which are defective in morality, arises from critics of the Old Testament morality having chosen to represent all these species of actions as not only imperfectly moral, but as positively bad. Thus, critics of a certain school have chosen to characterise all those actions of excessive justice which have been described as wholly bloodthirsty, vindictive, selfish, and barbarous, in their object and motives. They set down all this early action of mankind to simple inhumanity; then they say, How can we suppose the

Deity commanding such practices as these? They see no moral element in them, only the outbreak of hateful passion. They see in retaliation only impetuous revenge; they see in the law of Goel only the violent thirst for blood; they see in the exterminating wars of the Old Testament only the savage success of rapine and slaughter. They have no notion of such actions, except such as is described in these terms; and then they say, How can God command such actions? Is it not inconsistent with His attributes to do so? But before critics of Old Testament morality object upon these grounds to the Deity commanding in early ages those actions, they should first of all be sure that they do not themselves grossly depreciate and misrepresent such actions; that they do not misunderstand them; that the picture they have of them before their minds is not the coarsest daub; and that by their gratuitous assumptions they have not altogether dispossessed themselves of the moral key to those actions. Such wholesale condemnation shows an exceedingly false estimate of these early practices and proceedings. This early action of the sacred people was in truth inspired, in the substance of it, with a sense of justice, and with hatred of crime; it was impregnated with high feeling, vindication of right, protection of weakness, reverence for the dead; though there was excess and confusion in it,—people not discriminating accurately, and rushing impatiently into satisfying a rude appetite for just punishment. Especially, to set down the retributions of the Israelitish code

simply to sanguinary motives, is to do total wrong to the first great reachings after civil justice in the world,—to those wild and irregular but still noble impulses which formed a barrier for the weak against the strong.

Although for God to command simple cruelty and simple revenge is impossible, and such an idea must be rejected as horrible; it was not unfitting to Him, rather it was most meet and most suitable to His divine benevolence,—in indulgence to man's infirmity and slow moral growth,—to sustain the imperfect rudimental forms of the great institutions of civil justice. That righteous power in the community, grand in its maturity, was noble also in its birth; it was great even in infancy; we cannot despise, we cannot pity, we can only reverence, the early struggles of that great principle, as with effort, against infinite obstructions, and in the absence of all external resources and appliances which it had itself to create;—with the very moral sense rushing with early haste and impetuosity prematurely to its object, and almost enlisted *against* justice,—this sacred passion fought its way to stability, and to that steady supremacy which it afterwards attained in the state. There is, at its very first rise and commencement, the augury of the future edifice; a strength which shows that it will get the mastery. There is in truth, in the mere fact of such accommodating legislation, a pledge implied on the part of the Divine Legislator that He will provide, together with it, an education of higher scope to lead to a more perfect standard; but what is more, this pledge is ful-

filled. The Jewish dispensation, as a whole, does gradually elevate the moral sense of the nation, till it is prepared for the reception of the Christian code; and the highest sample of the nation does in fact receive that code, and spread it through the world. And though some may deny that such a result was due to anything but the natural growth of human reason,—which they may say fully accounts for it, without the need of a special revelation;—on the contrary, the singularity of this whole issue, unexampled as it was in the world, and without a parallel in any other nation, shows that there was some peculiar power at work in the Jewish dispensation, and that the people had been under a special educating Providence. But this will be the subject of another Lecture.

LECTURE X.

THE END THE TEST OF A PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.

BUT it will be said that upon the estimate of the moral standard of the Old Testament revelation, arrived at in the foregoing Lectures, we describe revelation as only giving men those commands which men give themselves. It will be said, What is the use of a revelation which only does this? The very use of a revelation, it will be urged, is to give men a higher standard than what they have by nature. If the Jewish revelation, then, did not do this, but only adopted and imposed the existing highest moral level, what more did it do for man than man had already done for himself? and how was a revelation any advantage which only established what had been established without a revelation? If man was not fit for a higher law, and if that excuses the low standard of revelation, it is still unexplained what *use* a low revelation is, which only takes man and provides for him at his present level.

But a progressive revelation, such as the Jewish, may adopt for its present use the highest imperfect moral standard of the age, as embodied in particular rules and precepts, and may yet contain an inner

movement and principle of growth in it, which will ultimately extricate it as a law out of the shackles of a rudimentary stage. In the Jewish dispensation there was something besides, over and above the actual letter of the law, which accompanied the dispensation. The actual letter, indeed, was a rise above the established popular standard, as the checks upon the law of retaliation and the law of Goel show. But there was also a principle of progress in the system, over and above the letter; an inner spirit and movement in it, a standing guidance which tended strictly in one direction. The worship of the one true God was in itself the great purifying and elevating principle of the system; drawing the heart and understanding upward, and giving a tendency toward ascent and advance to all the true moral elements in man. The dispensation itself looked out of itself; it looked forward. It confessed its own shortcomings; it owned itself a preparatory and rudimental structure. This was the standing prophecy which inhabited the older dispensation, and did not belong only as an individual gift to particular persons, but abode like a guiding spirit in the nation; inspiring it with a sense of an end beyond its present state, a goal in the distance towards which it was advancing. The vision of the pious Jew overlooked the immediate prospect of his nation, to fix upon a remoter horizon which was illuminated by a mysterious glory, and gleamed with a knowledge and perfection of which he had no accurate conception, but which still raised the future above the present day of the nation, and represented the latter only as a journey toward that

future day. And the same prophetical spirit in the people was also the teacher of the people. An instruction was going on in the Jewish nation throughout its whole course,—the instruction, not of the outward law, but of an inward mind, a spiritual intelligence, which maintained its place, and taught, *ex cathedra*, in the Jewish church, inspiring and illuminating a long succession of prophets, who in their turn revealed and expounded its lessons to the people. In a word, the Jewish nation was under a special Providence, not only with regard to its written Law but also with regard to a special spiritual intelligence which had its seat and taught in the nation throughout the whole period of the Law. Under this providential guidance, the eternal principles of the Law were extricated from its temporary structure, the true from the passing morals:—the reason and conscience of the Jew were enlightened to the perception of what was right and wrong.

If, then, there is something great and singular in the end, the end shows the design of the system; that it was more than a documentary code; that there was a living guide in it, working in a special direction all the time that it was making use of an imperfect standard and imperfect law. It is true, then, undoubtedly, that a Divine dispensation could not *condescend* to adopt an imperfect moral standard as a temporary one, unless it undertook the responsibility at the same time of elevating the people by education up to a *true* standard; but this is just the thing that was done. A prominent feature of the Jewish dis-

pensation was its rude public justice; but while the Divine dispensation accommodated itself to a defective idea of justice, it was at the very same time eradicating it: it was laying deep in the human mind at the very time the foundation of an enlightenment, which would utterly supplant that defective idea of *man* upon which that faulty justice arose, and put in its place the true spiritual idea of human individuality. The whole question of what belongs to the individual, what power one man has over another, the whole question of the "rights of man," has been one of slow growth. The whole scheme of modern thought on this subject is a late formation. The judicial sense which settles these points is comparatively new. A whole cycle was necessary to be gone through, a long period of education, before this principle got hold of the world; and when it did, it came out of revelation. For out of no philosophy under the sun has the idea of the "rights of man" issued. Philosophers laid it down very strongly that philosophers were great men —that they were "kings;" but man as such was not great in their eyes. It may be true that Epictetus says this, and that some other philosopher says that; but what came of anything they said? Did they do anything? Were their words more than passing shadows, or the two or three feeble beatings of a pulse which had no life in it? They were hardly even protests; and for any force they had the world might have gone on in its old way till now. Even the sanguinary sport of the gladiatorial shows was not interrupted by them, and it was not a heathen philosopher, but a

Christian devotee, who leapt into the circus, and by the protest of his death stopped that one triumph and exaltation of Satan. And the aberrations of justice would not have been corrected either. Darius might have gone on casting the wives and children to the lions, and Nebuchadnezzar might have continued to convert men's houses into dunghills, for anything these men would have done. But in the Bible there is an idea—an idea which is absolutely inconsistent with this of making one man belong to another, and treating him as the appendage to another. It was an idea which could not be kept down, but must work its way upward, so as to produce at last true justice; it was the idea of man as having a soul. If he had a soul, he could not be part of another man, and he must be himself, and no one else. It was this irrepressible germ of true justice and true freedom which was given in the Old Testament. Moses could not go on imagining that he was the appendage to another man, when he himself stood face to face with God, when he could pray to Him, intercede with Him; when he knew that he had *power* with God. This discovered man to himself, this showed him what he was, this must make him great in his own eyes; he must gain a different estimate of himself; he was great though guilty, nay, and even his guilt was like some dark background, upon which his greatness stood out; for his consciousness how much he fell short of his own standard only revealed the excellence of his own type and design. That he was in relations to the Universal Being *gave* him a substantial being, and *certified* it to

him: communion with God was communion with himself; he penetrated into himself, and religion unlocked the interior of his soul and brought its secrets into light; he knew himself and his own value; that he was not the creature of accidents,—mere spray from the unceasing tide of time, which rose up in the air and vanished,—but that there was something substantial in him.

History, and we may add the drama, has unfolded in its own way the greatness of man; but it has only done this for certain men—great actors on the stage of life. In the eye of revelation every man is great,—born for eternity, and an eternity of glory. It was impossible, when this idea of himself had been matured in man, that it should not have its effect upon the *civil* status of man: he was no appurtenance, no appendage, no belonging, but he was himself. Such justice as the early justice of the world, which has been previously considered, became an impossibility; one man could not be punished for another man's sins; and the human mass stood on a higher level with respect to civil rights and freedom generally.

There is a sense which is neither fanatical nor carnal, in which the Bible may be said to be the charter of human rights; it has endowed man with an individuality which he can never lose, and which rulers must respect. The governments of the old world and the new rise upon different bases. The old empires were founded upon the depreciation of man; he was told he was a nobody, that he was a piece of property, that he had no rights; and being

told it, he believed it; for weak man estimates himself according as others estimate him. Let everybody about a man conspire to put him down, and he is put down, he is lowered in his own eyes. It is hard for a man's sober persuasion, however easy for his infatuated vanity, to resist an external impression. He has to keep up a standing appeal to reason against the force of assertion, which is always difficult; he has to do without that surrounding and confirming voice which relieves the inward act of judgment. A man distrusts his own assertion the next moment, if half-a-dozen people about him deny it with sufficient positiveness —*unless* he knows his ground well. The force of outward opinion acts like a shock, and overthrows us immediately, unless we have a solid ground of truth in ourselves to resist it. Ancient empires, then, were founded upon the insignificance of man; even the so-called democracies of the old world were in truth oligarchies built upon the degradation of the mass. On the other hand, the governments of the new world are founded upon the high idea of man, as a being who has substance, rank, and rights. Nor is this the character of one form of government only, but of all the civilised governments of modern times, whether democratic or despotic in form; all recognise man as a being who has rights, and profess to legislate for the interests of the mass. It would be doing injustice to the most rigid European despotism to put it at all on a par with an ancient empire on this head; the two are based upon altogether a different standard of what is due to the mass of the people. But out of no

philosophy has this high estimate of man as such come: it has come straight from revelation. There, in the relation of man to God, is the origin of this great change of rank. Philosophy did not put man in communion with God, because the deity of philosophy was no object of worship, and there was no rank gained by communion with idols; but communion with the Universal Being gave man position, exalted him, and clothed him with honour.

What a vast body indeed of philosophy, poetry, and literature has the Bible formed, of which this sentiment regarding man is the ruling and animating idea. I do not refer to writings avowedly expository or illustrative of Scripture, but to what we call secular literature. *As* a philosopher, *e.g.*, Pascal's writings come under that head. We know the force and majesty of the Thoughts of Pascal; the realms of space and the worlds in them are full of grandeur in his philosophy, but there is one thing compared with which all this vast material universe is nothing. "All the bodies, the stars, the firmament, the earth and all its kingdoms, are not worth one soul; for that soul knows both itself and them, and they know nothing." The human soul thus stands apart and by itself as the one thinking substance, but it does not stop at this stage and level. Charity is above thought. Charity is supernatural; and he who has it has the life supernatural and immortal. Thus in the universe sphere rises above sphere. Thought and charity are each *sui generis*. Thought is of an order and kind above matter; charity is of an order and kind above

thought. All the matter in the world could not produce one thought; all the thought could not produce one instance of charity. "La distance infinie des corps aux esprits, figure la distance infiniment plus infinie des esprits à la charité." But man was designed to transcend this infinite space and attain the summit. The idea of the greatness of man—*grandeur de l'âme humaine*—thus penetrates the philosophy of Pascal. He pauses to look at this being at each of these two stages of his progress. First he contemplates him as a thinking being—"*Pensée fait la grandeur* de l'homme. . . . La grandeur des gens d'esprit est invisible, aux rois, aux riches, aux capitaines, à tous ces grands de chair." Then he contemplates him in the supernatural character —"dans son ordre de sainteté." "Les saints n'ont nul besoin des grandeurs charnelles ou spirituelles."[1] Nevertheless, though great in his faculties, and great in the end for which he was made, man lives at present a life of misery and exile "like a dispossessed monarch." The very proof of his greatness lies in his misery, for were he not born for higher things he would not be so dissatisfied with lower. He thus derives a sense of elevation even from that very sadness; at any rate he knows that he is wretched, and that he knows it, is evidence of the superiority of his nature. The chapter of fragments upon the "Grandeur et misère de l'homme" concludes with the words, "Let man estimate himself at his true value, honour himself in his capacities, despise himself in his neglect of those capacities."

[1] *Pensées de Pascal.* Ed. Faugère, vol. ii. pp. 90, 330.

This idea of the greatness of man has thus become a part of modern philosophy, and we see that the idea has a deep philosophical basis in Pascal's mind. Yet Pascal's thought is only Scripture put into a philosophical shape, and we have the whole idea of the "grandeur de l'homme" in one text—"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"[1] And thus it is that some minds cast in a philosophical mould, and partially disabled for seeing truth except in that shape—rendered somewhat callous too to the deep sense of Scripture by familiarity with the bare letter—are introduced to Scripture first through Pascal. He *translates* the Bible into the language of philosophy. Then, when they turn to Scripture again, they recognise the fount of Pascal, the type and original of his great thoughts. The inspired page then assumes new life and freshness in their eyes, and the triumph which his sharp weapons gave to the honest conscience over the hypocritical and carnal, is renewed more vividly upon the field of Scripture—more vividly, because the most beautiful and keenest philosophical truths derived from Scripture, are not equal to the plenary life, strength, and darted thoughts of the original.

That the modern world, however,—its governments, philosophy, literature,—should have been formed so largely as it has upon one Scriptural idea, is not so remarkable, perhaps, as another thing, viz. that an immense body of infidel literature and philosophy has

[1] Matt. xvi. 26.

been formed upon this same idea. It is indeed an extraordinary anomaly, that a truth for which we are indebted to Scripture alone has become the very watchword of infidelity, and that the enthusiasts of unbelief, its poets, dreamers, and political agitators, should have gone mad upon an idea which is historically the gift of Revelation to mankind—the greatness of man as such. It has been the special cry of the revolutionist, that it is not as a king, as a noble, as a star of refined life, even as a cultivated and educated person only, that man is great; that he is great in himself; that every man has in him the dignity and excellence of human nature, and is an independent being, and has inalienable rights; that every man has it in him to be "crowned King of Life." The mind of the infidel poet has kindled at this truth:—

> "Yon sun,
> Lights it the great alone? Yon silver beams,
> Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage thatch
> Than on the dome of kings? Is mother earth
> A step-dame to her numerous sons, who earn
> Her unshared gifts with unremitting toil?"[1]
>
> . . . .
>
> "Yet every heart contains perfection's germ:
> The wisest of the sages of the earth,
> That ever from the stores of reason drew
> Science and truth, and virtue's dreadless tone,
> Were but a weak and inexperienced boy,
> Proud, sensual, unimpassioned, unimbued
> With pure desire and universal love,
> Compared to that high being, of cloudless brain,
> Untainted passion, elevated will,

[1] Shelley's *Queen Mab.*

Which death (who even would linger long in awe
Within his noble presence, and beneath
His changeless eyebeam) might alone subdue.
Him, every slave now dragging through the filth
Of some corrupted city his sad life,
Pining with famine, swoln with luxury,
Blunting the keenness of his spiritual sense,
With narrow schemings and unworthy cares,
Or madly rushing through all violent crime,
To move the deep stagnation of his soul,—
Might imitate and equal." [1]

Had the poet been asked whence he got this idea of man, this sense of the dignity of every man, of how much there was in him, and what was due to him, he could not have pointed to a single ancient philosopher as his teacher. The ancient world had no such idea; and had such a notion been suggested to one of its luminaries, he would have scouted it as visionary and fantastic. The poet has got this idea out of the Bible, however reluctant he might be to own it. It does not exist elsewhere, but only in revelation and the derivatives from revelation. This is a matter of fact. We know the history of this idea as we know the history of a scientific idea, of a discovery or invention. The poet, then, may denounce revelation, but he uses it. It has taught him, it has inspired him. It has imparted to him that conception which is the stimulus to his powers, and around which all the treasures of his exuberant fancy collect. And indeed, though cut away from its root, severed from the parent stock of truth, and exiled, this great idea still retains the traces

[1] *Queen Mab.*

of its birth. It is a noble and an inspiring thought, but at the same time it is an anarchical one. It swells with tempestuous pride and wilfulness, in the place of that resignation which tempers its strength and vigour upon its own natural ground. Yet it is instructive to see how full the world has become of this idea of humanity when once disclosed; how it exults in it, and cannot contain itself. As soon as the truth is caught, it is taken up and absorbed into the vortex of human speculation and passion. It is refracted through a thousand mediums, and but too often glares with a sinister and distorted light, infuriating and not elevating the mass; but still, however coloured by human thought, it has taken possession of the world, and divides ancient from modern society by an unsurpassable boundary.

So large has been the fruit which that first truth of revelation, the communion of man with God, has borne, in affecting the relation of man to man, and in improving his civil interests. And thus, though in certain particular Divine interpositions in the Old Testament history, God accommodated His dealings to a defective and debased idea of human individuality, (as when He commanded the family or nation to be included in the same punishment with its guilty head), He was at the very time, in the great *foundation* of His revelation, educating man in the highest truth upon this very subject; and implanting in him that true idea of himself which was destined to produce the whole edifice of modern society and of civil justice. In human affairs this is considered to be the highest

wisdom:—to accommodate instruction for the occasion, to the imperfect knowledge of the learner, at the same time that you implant a *seed* of more perfect knowledge. And the same rule applies to the Divine dispensations. While the old type of justice was being executed, the new work of man's education was being carried out. A law was given and a discipline was laid down for this purpose. The Law contained that very truth of the relationship of man to the one true God which was ultimately to raise him; and this truth was the sum and substance of the Law. The Law then contained the source and secret of man's future elevation.

But before the Law had worked its end it had in the meantime to be maintained and enforced. The Jewish people chafed under the yoke. The history of the nation throughout shows that the Law was really above the great mass, that it contained principles too sublime for them. It is a history of long lapses of the main body of the people into idolatry, into which they fell because they could not rise to the idea of the communion of the creature with his Maker, of man with the Universal Being; they could only imagine relationship to inferior invisible beings, or *gods* whom they clothed with material form. The downward tendency to idolatry was the potent and formidable danger which kept the true faith and the true conception of God constantly trembling upon the verge of utter suppression, and with difficulty just emerging above the flood of corruption: while it was essential to the Divine purposes that that faith should stand,

and stand not only as the faith of some individuals but as the national faith. The nation, therefore, was terrified into a formal obedience by every scourge that the Divine wrath could employ, and every form of wholesale punishment, which included families in the guilt of fathers, subjects in the guilt of their kings. But the purpose of such judgments was to subjugate man to that law which was ultimately to purify and elevate him, and to keep in existence the precious seed of the future enlightenment of the world. There was a scheme, a purpose, an end in view, in the whole terrific preparatory discipline of the Law. It was administered in order to bow the stubborn neck of man, and keep it from slipping from under the yoke. Under the Law he must, in spite of himself, improve; once severed from it he was a lost being. The enforcement of the Law was thus the task of one dispensation, though its fruits were shown under another.

It is evident, then, that a progressive revelation—if the idea of such a revelation is once admitted—must be judged by its end and not by its beginning. We see before us a legislative structure, straight from the hands of the original Lawgiver, containing a body of ancient rules and precepts, obviously partaking of the spirit of the age in which they came out, and reflecting an early moral standard. We then call this the *morality of the Old Testament dispensation.* But according to any rule of judging in such cases, the morality of a progressive dispensation is not the morality with which it starts, but that with which it

concludes. The test is not the commencement but the result. Whatever it is in which the system results, and which by its own natural course it reaches, that is the standard of the dispensation. Because from the final result we infer the intention, and the intention makes the morality of the dispensation. By the gradual creation of a perfect standard, the will of the dispensation from the first is declared to have been in favour of it. There is a side, indeed, on which, in the nature of the case, it exhibits a defective morality, because there is a side on which it is stationary. The *litera scripta manet;* the written code necessarily always continues to give the original precepts *as they stood,* and if any of these are cast in the rude spirit of the early ages of the dispensation, its rude and imperfect moral standard is so far stereotyped. Upon the side of the external written letter it is rude and imperfect. On this side it continues for ever, in the nature of the case, to point backward for its moral criterion; but the living teacher, the guiding spirit in the system, from the first, points forward, and is throughout of that moral character which it will ultimately establish. This active essence of the dispensation is throughout in sympathy with its *latest* production. Do not judge it then, by the stationary letter, but by the principle of progress which is evidently rooted and inherent in it; by that inner movement, by that dominating and persevering tendency, which is the vital spirit of it, and which finally overcomes the temporary and passing elements.

Whether the imperfect *morality* of the Old Testament dispensation is a correct expression or not, depends in short upon what you mean by the *dispensation*. If you mean the document of the dispensation, it is imperfect morality; if you mean the design *in* the dispensation, the morality of that *design* is Christian morality. Taking the highest sample of the nation as the proper representative of it, regarded as the pupil of a Divine guidance, we see the Jewish people, under the teaching of their dispensation, so advanced in course of ages in the moral faculty, that they at length embrace and grasp the full Christian morals; that they preach this moral standard throughout the world; and that it thus becomes ultimately the standard of the whole of civilised mankind. When you talk then of the imperfect and mistaken morality of the Old Testament dispensation, ask yourself, to begin with, what you mean, and what you intend to assert by that expression. Do you mean to say that the written law was imperfect? If that is all, you state what is simply a fact; but this fact does not touch the morality of the Lawgiver; because He is abundantly fortified by the defence that He could give no higher at the time to an unenlightened people. Do you mean to assert that the scope and design was imperfectly moral? In that case you are contradicted by the whole course of history. Look at the Jewish Dispensation as being a working system, look at it as an actual instructor at work for ages upon the nation under it. How does its work turn out? How is

the pupil brought up? What is the moral standard in which this course of education issues? That question has been just now answered, and that question decides the scope of the dispensation. The imperfect standard of the original code and nation can only be made a charge by a confusion of mind. You blame in the Old Testament dispensation, *i.e.*, in its *Author*, what? The moral standard he permits? It is the highest man can then receive. The moral standard he desires? He desires a perfect moral standard, and ultimately establishes it. Thus, between the two goals of the dispensation, its commencement and its end, your charge falls to the ground, or strikes the air. You bring out with all your power the actual moral condition of the Jewish nation, how rude it was; how coarse, how blind and indiscriminating its moral perception: and you think the facts of themselves condemn the revelation; that the low condition of the people condemns the Lawgiver; but the Lawgiver is not responsible for the material he has to work upon, the system is not to blame for the rudeness of the people it has to correct. The material of accusation is thus made by *the mental confusion* of the accuser, and at the first clear sight vanishes into air. Rather the material of accusation becomes itself evidence of the Divine power in the system, and the guarantee to its authority. You expatiate upon the actual crudities of the Jewish morality, as if the dispensation were accountable for them; but if it in fact overcomes them, all the rough-

ness of the material which it conquers only redounds to its glory.

"But," it will be said, "the crude and imperfect nature of Jewish morals is a plain fact of Scripture history itself, while this running design and inner current of the dispensation is only an interpretation put upon Jewish history by theologians. It is true, the Jewish nation gradually grew out of a rude and barbarous state, and attained to a certain civilisation; and with that civilisation came a finer moral standard; but this was not the result of the dispensation they were under, but due only to the natural growth and expansion of reason. The moral standard of the dispensation is before us in black and white, and that was a very defective one, and sanctioned vengeance and bloodshed on a large scale; the people, or the higher minds among them, at last outgrew this moral standard by the force of reason. This is the natural and rational account of the progress of the Jewish nation, and of the high morality which at last issued out of that nation. But to attribute this result to the inner working of a dispensation whose written code was marked by plain defects and shortcomings, is mere speculation, and by no means probable speculation."

To this the answer is, that other nations of the world, beside the Jewish, began with an imperfect and crude moral standard; but, of all these nations we observe that, as they began so they ended. Hindu law, Roman law, Greek codes of law, all led their respective communities a certain way in morals, but

they all stopped short of any true development in morals. They never became active inspiring teachers of the people under them,—seeds of enlightenment and advancement. Look at Spartan law; has it the slightest spring or elasticity in it? or has it anything approaching to a principle of growth in it? It performs a certain set of motions like an automaton; its whole power is restricted within a certain area of public military virtue, and it has no inward self-moving power by which it can transcend its original limits. This is perhaps an extreme case. But Roman law, as a moral law, works in chains; it cannot liberate itself from its own inflexible adherence to the type of slavery, and from those barbarous definitions of personal rights which left no station but a servile one to wife or son; thus degrading society at its fountainhead of family life. The Roman law remained essentially savage till Christianity released it and set it free from its bonds. It could not free itself; it could not make the wife a free woman and at the same time give her the sanctity of marriage, but could only confer freedom on her at the cost of license, by the exchange of marriage for a contract which let in indefinite divorce. Hindu law has not raised itself. In other nations, then, the ideas of justice, benevolence, purity, stay at an incipient stage, and never become more than half ideas; in the Jewish alone is there moral progress,—an advance, which begins and goes steadily on unchecked, till it reaches the New or Christian Law. In the Jewish nation alone the Law acts not only as a document, but as a guiding prin-

ciple in the nation. There it is a light, a teacher; it does not abide within its letter only, but comes out in the shape of comment or interpretation to suggest and inspire. It is accompanied and guarded by the great Prophetic order, which carries on, in conjunction with the Law and in check upon it, a standing guidance and teaching. There is a moral element in the dispensation which has an intrinsic and overruling force of its own, a free unstunted growth, by which it arrives at its completion.

But exception may be taken, last of all, to the fundamental assumption upon which this whole argument has been based;—upon the very idea, to begin with, of a progressive revelation. "Natural reason," it may be said, "is, as everybody admits, and as we know by experience, slow and gradual in its processes, it requires time for developing and maturing itself, and it only gains possession of truths after a succession of trials and delays; but why should a Divine revelation be subject to such conditions as these? Is not a revelation given for the very purpose of supplying the deficiencies of reason? But if so, why, when it is given, does it exhibit these very deficiencies? If revelation is as slow and dilatory as reason, is it indeed revelation at all, or is it simply reason operating all the time? For what can be the meaning of the Divine Being instituting an exception to His ordinary providence, if the exception after all follows the pattern of the rule? what reason can there be why an Omnipotent Being should not communicate what He has to communicate summarily, and by one act? There is

that in man, by his fundamental constitution, to which a truth can be imparted; his reason is in him by nature. Why is not a truth, which is capable of being apprehended, not imparted to that reason at once? And are not such truths as these capable of being apprehended immediately?—say the Christian law of marriage, that a man should have but one wife;—Christian justice, that a man should be punished only for his own fault. These truths are perfectly plain truths if they are truths at all; and revelation is able to give man the proper guarantee that they are truths; and if he knows them to be such, what has man to do but to set about practising them? Why then should God not reveal what He has to reveal at once? Why should He purposely deal out His instruction piecemeal, and postpone what He *can* give immediately, and let a special revelation stand over centuries, which could have been given at the commencement? A progressive *revelation* is itself an inconsistent transaction, and the very idea of it cannot be admitted. For if there is power to possess man with a certain moral truth now, at this moment, by a summary act of Divine grace, all ground why the knowledge should be put off is gone, and you are left without a reason to account for the delay."

This, then, is the objection raised. But here an argument opens upon us, founded on the nature of man as God created him, which necessitates the use of language imposed upon us by our ignorance. When, then, we speak of the omnipotence of God, we do not mean that He can simply and nakedly do anything that

can be stated in words. It is an attribute with conditions; I mean that is the mode in which we express it in language. God can no more *force* an immediate moral enlightenment upon an existing age, and antedate a high moral standard by two thousand years, than He can instantaneously impart a particular character to an individual. He has endowed man with intellectual faculties of a certain kind, which move in a certain way, and with a gradual progressive motion requiring time. He cannot impart to it a truth in such a way as contradicts that institution of the understanding, and communicate in a moment that which, by the laws of the being's nature, can be only received slowly and by degrees. The natural motion of the human understanding is by steps and stages; after one effort it is weary, sinks back exhausted, and cannot go farther just then, but rests: and there is a pause in the progress until another impulse comes, and another step is made; and thus the work is accomplished gradually, and some large and complete truth is at last arrived at. To suppose the Deity, then, imparting in a moment some ultimate truth which experience shows requires time for men to embrace, is to suppose Him imparting the truth in a way which contradicts those very laws which He has Himself laid down in the constitution of the being with whom He is dealing.

The understanding of man, again, moves by the action of the will; it cannot be raised to the comprehension of any great truth without a succession of acts of attention, and the will must keep up attention.

The will and the understanding, then, cannot be separated in the advancement of the human mind in truth, and in the progress of revelation. But can the Divine power control the human will in its collective aspect any more than it can in its individual? Can it dictate the mode of taking in a revelation, any more than it can secure individual conduct? The question respecting the immediate comprehension and acceptance of a revelation is very much analogous to the question of human action and its subjection to the Divine power; the possibilities in conducting revelation are much akin to the possibilities of dictation to the human will. The whole question comes in, of the relations of the Divine power to the human will.

Here, then, we are launched upon a fundamental difficulty. The will of the human race influences the understanding of the human race in its mode of taking in a revelation. A revelation is accepted readily when it concurs with men's wishes, but the understanding, when separated from the inclination, stops short, and refuses to exert itself. Can the fact, then, that it *is* a revelation reverse this slowness in the understanding?—this slowness which is produced by want of inclination? There is no more reason to suppose that it can in the human race at large than that it can in an individual: that the mind of the race can be enlightened by an instantaneous act of Divine omnipotence, than the mind of an individual can be. Nor is there any more reason to suppose that an individual's mind can be enlightened all at once by an act of revelation, than that a *man's* conduct can be

made *good* all at once. The Divine power can assist the individual; and yet the individual has a will that can resist the Divine power, astounding as the assertion may appear. And the human race has collectively the same will, and can resist the progress of revelation within the collective human mind, so as to make it a gradual instead of an instantaneous work, and will do so if it act naturally. We are accustomed to the idea of a limit to the Divine power in dealing with *one* individual man;—that God cannot force an individual to do good acts against his will, but that his will mysteriously, yet still actually or in fact, has a power of resisting the Divine will; but we do *not* think of *society* resisting God; the *race* resisting Him. Yet the same limitation which attaches to the Divine omnipotence dealing with *one* man, applies also to the same attribute in dealing with *mankind collectively:* it applies to the advancement of the human race, morally and intellectually, and to Divine revelation as the means of such advancement, just as much as it applies to one man, and to ordinary grace as an influencer. This instantaneous enlightenment of mankind by revelation is a wild notion; it is a method of dealing with man as a mass, which is utterly at variance with the conditions which attach to the Divine omnipotence in dealing with man as an individual. Is there in *one* individual an inherent *vis inertiæ*, a stubbornness which is capable of effectively withstanding the Divine influence and desire for his good; and even if it yield finally, can first withstand it from time to time, thus necessitating successive applications of the Divine

moving power? The same principle applies to the Divine action upon the race. This stubbornness and *vis inertiæ* exists in the race; nor is collective humanity by its own inherent constitution capable of being raised to such a level of truth by an instantaneous leap, as it can be made to attain by a long dispensation.

The difficulty of a slow and progressive revelation, as being inconsistent with the Divine omnipotence, is thus only the fundamental difficulty of the Divine power and man's free will. The Divine power acts in a man's conversion, but it is quite consistent with that power acting, that it should act gradually, and only be able to act gradually. In the same way, there is nothing unreasonable in the idea and notion that the human race can be elevated and improved by a Divine dispensation, and yet that that Divine dispensation may be only able to improve and elevate it gradually. The advance and progress may still be proved to have been owing to that dispensation, because it may appear that that result has only *in fact been ultimately attained in conjunction* with it.

It must be remembered that that which the Deity communicates *with*, when He makes a revelation to man, is his *reason;* and that a revelation does not profess to *change* the reason of man, or to substitute one kind of reason for another kind, when it communicates fresh truth. It does not profess to alter the fundamental mode of thought in man, or the pace which is natural to the operations of reason.

Revelation, in imparting what it does impart to man,

takes reason as it finds it, with all its imperfections, with its slow reception of whatever is new, and its hesitation and irregularity. Revelation does not, with the new truth it gives, create a new instrument for receiving that truth. That which is imparted is new indeed, but that which receives what is imparted is the natural understanding of man, which specially requires time. That is to say, when a revelation is given to man, it is man to whom it is given; and he gets out of it what it contains according to the natural constitution of his mind. Moral action goes with intellectual. But God, so to speak, cannot force moral action upon him; and we find that the same obstruction which there is to the Divine power in the case of an individual and his improvement, exists also in the case of the race and its improvement; that the same obstruction which is in the way of conversion immediately, exists in the way of enlightenment by revelation immediately. Free will is equally at the bottom of the slowness with which both processes take place; that process by which truths are seen and come to light, and that by which moral changes take place.

But it may be objected, when we say that revelation cannot produce its effect instantaneously, because God has created the reason of man with certain habits and a certain progress and pace of its own, which resist quicker enlightenment, that the very principle of miracles is that God does produce effects which are contrary to the institution of certain laws which He has established in the world for ordinary use. That, therefore, if there *ever* is such a thing as a miracle,

such a thing might be expected to take place in the case of the action of a revelation; and that revelation must be able to produce, and if it can should produce, its effect upon mankind instantaneously. But it must be remembered that it is a different thing,—a contradiction to a physical law, and a contradiction to the real will of a real being. A physical law has nothing wherewith to resist God, Who can as easily make or do a thing in another way than that of law, as by that law. A physical law is as nothing, regarding it as preventing God from acting in any special way. If this law acts it acts; but if it does not act, some other mode does for the occasion. But it is a different thing when we come to the actual wills of real beings. The will of man is *admitted*, (with that reserve which, as ignorant creatures, we must fall back upon in such mysterious statements,) as that which has the power of resisting the will of God. Free will is claimed as a real attribute of man,—power to do or not to do. The will can resist God's will, and can stop the progress of a work of God. Is this an intricate view of Divine dealings, and does putting Divine power under such checks and conditions as a progressive revelation implies, seem radically to interfere with the attribute? This is an objection which, if it be of any force at all, does not apply to a progressive revelation specially; it applies to the whole idea of a Deity, as compatible with human *free will*. Human free will is an internal modification of the idea of God, which is only prevented from interfering injuriously with the idea, by the intervention of our resort to ignorance. As

ignorant creatures we are not entitled to say that apparent limitations of the Divine power are real ones, because they may be only such as the mathematical consistency of truth itself imposes; that is only verbal restrictions upon power, and not real ones. To the intellectual conception, however, the idea of God is thus an idea with checks and conditions in it; and those who would simplify it absolutely, would establish an idol and not a God. If we invent an idol, all is plain enough; there are no enigmas in an idol; there are no reasons why individuals cannot be converted in an instant, and why the human race cannot be enlightened in an instant by an abstract Omnipotence. But if we suppose the Deity to be the Being we represent Him in our sermons, our popular treatises, our exhortations, who *cannot* do some things, and cannot change man without his own concurrence, this is a Deity who cannot give enlightenment or implant a revelation in man by an instantaneous act. Nor does the God of the Jewish covenant do this. Simply, He does not do what God, in our ordinary common-sense conception of Him, does not do.

To sum up the argument, I explained in a former Lecture that it was the peculiarity of the Jewish dispensation that it was both present and prospective in its design; that it worked for a future end, while it provided also for the existing wants of man.

The system having thus a double aim, it is obvious that of these two objects, that which is prior and takes the first place in the intention of the system is the *end*. In what did the dispensation actually result?

In a perfect moral standard. Then we only argue upon ordinary rules of evidence when we say that that was the intention of the dispensation, and that that was the intention even while its morality was actually imperfect. The morality of the Author of the dispensation is the true morality of the dispensation; the final morals are the true morals, the temporary are but scaffolding; the true morals are contained in the end and in the whole.

Popular critics of the morality of the Old Testament apply the coarsest possible arguments to this subject. They think it enough to point to a rude penal law, to a barbarous custom, to an extirpating warfare, and it at once follows that this is the morality of the Bible; but this is to judge the sculptor from the broken fragment of stone. It was not the morality of the Bible unless it was the morality of the Bible as a whole, and the whole is tested by the end and not by the beginning. Scripture was progressive: it went from lower stage to higher, and as it rose from one stage to another it blotted out the commands of an inferior standard and substituted the commands of a higher standard. This was the nature of the dispensation as being progressive; it was the essential operation of the Divine government as it acted in that period of the world. The dispensation, then, as a whole, did not command the extermination of the Canaanites, but a subordinate step did; and this step passed from use and sight as a higher was attained. The fact, though instructive as past history, became obsolete, and was left

behind as a present lesson; and the dispensation in its own nature was represented by its end. The very lower steps led to the end, and were for the sake of leading to it. The critic adheres to a class of commands which existed for the moment, as facts of the day; but the turning point is the issue, and the whole can only be interpreted by the event. The morality of Scripture is the morality of the end of Scripture; it is the last standard reached, and what everything else led up to.

Nothing, then, can be cruder and more rude than to identify Scripture with the action of the day. In the eyes of some, the action of the day is the self-evident morality of Scripture, and no argument is thought necessary; but whatever the facts may be, it is a fundamental mistake to suppose that there is any conclusion to be got from them, except through the defile of an argument. In assuming a God in the dispensation, we assume a presiding mind and intention; and of that intention not the immediate fact, but the upshot of the dispensation is the test. We say the upshot is worth all the extraordinary and apparently lowering accommodation, the stooping process, and humiliation of the Divine government. God allowed, during all those ages, rude men to think of Him as one of themselves, acting with the rudest and dimmest idea of justice. But He condescended at the moment, to prevail and conquer in the end. In entering into and accepting their confused ideas, He grappled with them. Through what a chaos of mistakes did final light arise, and the true

idea of justice make its way in the world! And God tolerated the mistakes, and allowed His commands to go forth in that shape, but the condescension was worth the result. It is the result alone which can explain those accommodations; but the result does explain them, and bring them out as successful Divine policy.

THE MANICHÆANS AND THE JEWISH FATHERS.

ST. AUGUSTINE is perhaps the most marvellous controversial phenomenon which the whole history of the Church from first to last presents. One great controversy is usually enough for one man; but he conducted, or it may be said finished, three; the Manichæan, the Pelagian, and the Donatist. But it is not so much the number of the controversies which he conducted, as the vigour and prolific power of his pen upon each, and the extraordinary force with which he stamped his own statements permanently upon the Church, which is the remarkable fact. The language in which he summed up the Pelagian controversy reigned in the Church and dictated her formulæ; and after moulding the schools of the Middle Ages, prescribed the Articles of our own Church. He was superlatively fitted for fulfilling this function, as well by his defects as by his gifts and merits. Armed with superabundant facility of expression,—so that he himself observes that one who had written so much must have a good deal to answer for,—he was able to hammer any point of view which he wanted, and which was desirable as a counter-

acting one to a pervading heresy, with endless repetition upon the ear of the Church; at the same time varying the forms of speech sufficiently to please and enliven. In argument he was not too deep; to have been so would have very much obstructed his access to the mind of the mass, and prevented him from getting hold of the ear of the Church at large. Nothing could have been more fatal to his influence than that he should have got himself imbedded in some profound question, the solution of which must only have taken him into lower and still more difficult depths. He undoubtedly dealt with profound questions, but his mode of dealing with them was not such as to entangle him in knots and intricacies, arising from the disposition to do justice to all sides of truth. On some subjects of controversy, as on the Manichæan, his line was clearly laid down for him in Scripture, in the assertion of one God of infinite power and goodness, to which Manichæanism was a direct contradiction; though here he had perhaps in parts and branches of the controversy rather *neat* answers, than full or final answers. In the Pelagian controversy he had one side of truth, and one fundamental and conspicuous assertion of Scripture, to defend, of which the Pelagian doctrine was an audacious denial; but he did not allow the unity and simplicity of his answers to be at all interfered with by large and inclusive views of truth. To the extreme contradictory on the one side, he gave the extreme contradictory on the other; and he gave it, as he did every answer he gave, with the most triumphant

copiousness of language; with all the structure and finished mould of a consummate rhetorical style; with the most neat and admirable adaptation of the form of answer to the form of the hostile proposition; and with a perpetual freshness, and flexibility of shape and construction, in the composition of his argument. Augustine is indeed, with all this, monotonous, and perhaps no writer in the whole of Church history tries the patience of his reader more than he does. The surface is elegantly varied, but the variety is thin and superficial, as compared with a monotony which is solid, bulky, and substantial. The reader feels that the discussion, under Augustine's hand, is wanting in the novelty and variety of trunk lines of thought. We travel over the ground, aware that we are not making solid way upon the substantial point; while the outer coating of the subject shows variety and versatility. But this was in fact all the better for his writing, looked at in its controversial scope. It was so much the more powerful an instrument for impressing a certain class of thoughts upon the mass of men; so much the more effective from its repetition and constancy. He was made, by this very modification of a varied monotony,—perpetually bringing in the same ideas under very slight difference of dress,—only the more nearly perfect a controversialist; only the more effective an instrument for fixing particular positions, and impressing a particular language upon the Church. Augustine's was a different thinking from modern philosophical thought: he did not advance by regular

steps, and unfold an argument from a foundation, as a modern superior writer does; he thought with his pen in his hand, and the great mass of his treatises were pamphlets; many of them, latterly, hit off in the intervals of public business, and to meet particular occasions and attacks.

His first controversy was the Manichæan, to which he was the more committed from having been a convert to Manichæanism himself. And it may be asked, What could have made Augustine ever turn Manichæan? When we come across these Oriental religions, Gnosticism and Manichæanism, their phraseology, whether it is about æons, or about nations of light or nations of darkness, and mixtures of the two, is so extravagant and empty, that it seems the invention of children rather than of men. In Manichæanism (it is Augustine's description), "On the side of the bright and holy land was the deep and immense land of darkness, wherein dwelt fiery bodies, pestilent races. There were boundless darknesses emanating from the same nature, countless with their progeny; beyond which were muddy and turbid waters with their inhabitants, and within which were horrible and vehement winds with their princes and producers. Then again a destructive fiery region with its leaders and nations."[1] The Manichæans spoke of the five caves of the nation of darkness; they "assigned to the people of darkness five elements, each of which produced its own chief; and these elements they called

[1] S. Aug. *contra Epist. Manichæi*, 15.

vapour, darkness, fire, water, wind."[1] Both light and darkness were spoken of as Principles, Natures, Substances, Gods;"[2] In Manichæanism, then, the kingdom of darkness made an attack on the kingdom of light; and the Light or Divine Nation, being in some trepidation for itself, thought it best to make a compact with its opponent; and a certain section of the former, entering into combination with the latter, formed the composition of this world. With respect, then, to these and such like representations, it must be observed that they are only the pictorial part of the system giving a scenic effect to the theory. Though even this had its influence in proselytising; and when Augustine says that this imagery put into marked contrast before him the "most lucid substance of God," and evil as having its own foul and hideous bulk, whether gross which they called earth, or thin and subtle like the body of the air,"[3] we can imagine the winning effect of a bright and dark contrast on a boy. But all this must have been meant, by the very construction of Dualistic theories, only as so much imagery, putting the theory into a portrait shape, and adapting it to the minds of the mass. What was represented by it, was, that there were two original substances in nature, a good and an evil one. And this has an argument of its own, which is by no means obsolete at the present day. All Dualistic religions contain their main appeal to human reason in the circumstance of their pretension to represent

[1] S. Aug. *contra Epist. Manichæi*, 18; and *de Hæres.* 46, p. 35, Ed. Migne. [2] *Contra Faustum*, xxi. 1. [3] *Confess.* v. 20.

facts. This is a mixed world, and it must have a mixed Deity. That is their real basis. In what form they do this,—whether under the form of two gods, a good and an evil, or of one God who is a mixture of both good and evil, or who is devoid of either,—is a subordinate point.

Hume declared it his opinion that there was a great deal in Manichæanism. That philosopher, although he could, as he said, argue ingeniously for ever against final causes, still avowed that, as a man of common sense, he could not see his way to denying that this world must have originated in a Designing Mind. But what kind of Mind? Yes, that was the difficulty. "Look round this universe," he says. "What an immense profusion of beings, animated and organised, sensible and active! You admire this prodigious variety and fecundity. But inspect a little more narrowly these living existences, the only beings worth regarding. How hostile and destructive to each other! How insufficient all of them for their own happiness! How contemptible or odious to the spectator! The whole presents nothing but the idea of a blind Nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children! Here the Manichæan system occurs as a proper hypothesis to solve the difficulty: and no doubt, in some respects, it is very specious, and has more probability than the common hypothesis, by giving a plausible account of the strange mixture of good and ill which appears in life. But if we consider, on the

other hand, the perfect uniformity and agreement of the parts of the universe, we shall not discover in it any marks of the combat of a malevolent with a benevolent being. There is, indeed, an opposition of pains and pleasures in the feelings of sensible creatures: but are not all the operations of Nature carried on by an opposition of principles, of hot and cold, moist and dry, light and heavy? The true conclusion is, that the original Source of all things is entirely indifferent to all these principles; and has no more regard to good above ill, than to heat above cold, or to drought above moisture, or to light above heavy."

"There may *four* hypotheses be framed concerning the first causes of the universe: *that* they are endowed with perfect goodness; *that* they have perfect malice; *that* they are opposite, and have both goodness and malice; *that* they have neither goodness nor malice. Mixt phenomena can never prove the two former unmixt principles; and the uniformity and steadiness of general laws seem to oppose the third. The fourth, therefore, seems by far the most probable."[1]

Hume, then, regarded Dualism only as one form of that theory of theism which was based upon the actual condition of the universe. It was an inconvenient form, because there was no appearance of a struggle in the construction of the world. But so long as your God was an induction from facts, which philosophically Hume thought He must be, He must be either two, a good and an evil, or one Deity *mixed* of both; or a wholly negative and extra-moral Deity. And thus

[1] Hume's *Philosophical Works*, ed. 1826, vol. ii. p. 526.

in Mr. Mill's autobiography we see a testimony paid to the merits of Manichæanism as a mode of theism doing justice to facts. Mill says of his father James Mill, that the grounds of his objection to established theism were moral more than intellectual: that he found it impossible to believe that a world so full of evil was the work of an Author combining infinite power with perfect goodness and righteousness; and that his intellect spurned the subtleties by which men attempt to blind themselves to this open contradiction; that he would not have equally condemned the Sabæan or Manichæan theory of a good and an evil principle struggling against each other for the government of the universe; and that he had expressed surprise that no one revived that theory in our own time.[1]

So far, however, Manichæanism was only the ancient theistic Dualism, and stood upon the ground of the Parsee religion, and the doctrine of Zoroaster or the Magi. But Manichæanism had this notable peculiarity, that it was a proselytising and propagandising religion. In this respect it had parted company with the parent stock. It was Magianism, not staying at home and content with its ancestral domains, but wandering about over the whole world like a knight-errant in the cause of truth and in quest of disciples. It was the ordinary character of these Oriental religions to be stationary; where they had grown up, there they remained as traditionary systems, and they manifested no inclination for adventure or conquest. And so Magianism was naturally a stationary

[1] *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*, p. 39.

religion: but this was a fiery offshoot of it, which had so far diverged from the character of the parent religion. Manichæanism was Zoroastrianism feeling a want and void in its own local confinement, beginning to suspect that truth ought to be common to all the world, and so adopting the aim and the scope of a universal religion.

But this could not be managed without considerable difficulty. The ancient Zoroastrianism had very small resources for a universal religion. There was little to satisfy the human heart in a twofold Deity, and in an internecine war of good and evil, in which the theory did not speak, at any rate with any trumpet voice, as to the issue. But when the Manichæan had issued forth from the precincts of his own national worship, and looked around him on open ground, he saw before him the youthful and vigorous religion of Christianity, avowedly aiming at universal empire, and considering that its lawful and natural prize. It had already even, partially accomplished its purpose, had broken down the boundaries of nations, and shown itself of a universal type. This was a striking phenomenon to a religious propagandist, who aimed at the same result, but with wholly inadequate means. The idea struck him that he would use the Christian religion for the purpose of giving universality to the Magian. He had, as it were, a universality provided for him and ready at hand in the catholic Church and creed, if only it could be appended to his own religion; but unfortunately at present it belonged to a different stock and antecedents. How was the transfer to

be effected? Obviously by a bargain or compact of some kind; but what? Magianism must of course engraft its own main doctrines upon Christianity; that was essential, otherwise it would not be Magianism which would attain universality *in* Christianity; which was the object. But, on the other hand, Magianism, *i.e.* the Manichæan offshoot of it, would professedly receive into itself certain portions of Christianity. There would thus be an incorporation of Magianism into Christianity, or Christianity into Magianism; and the combination would be an eternal and universal religion.

Manichæanism, then, in order to fulfil its share in the compact, incorporated in a certain shape, though a wholly spurious one, the Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement. It acknowledged in words a Holy Ghost,[1] but it placed His habitation in the air. It acknowledged again the Second Person in the Trinity, and gave Him the name of Logos; but it assigned to Christ the sun as His residence, and even identified Him with the vivifying power of the sun. This was a physical theory of our Lord, who thus became partly the ancient Mithra of the Magian system, and partly the source of the animating principle of the physical world. This was the office of *power*[2] which belonged to the Redeemer. The *patibilis Christus*, the *suffering* Christ, consisted in the same power being detached and delivered from the channels in which it had resided—*i.e.*, from the receptacles of vegetable nature; which detachment and delivery took place by death.

[1] *Contra Faustum*, xx. 2. [2] *Ib.* xx. 2.

Our Lord was thus spoken of as undergoing injury, degradation, and pollution, "in the bands of earthly materials, in the juices of herbs, and in the corruption of all flesh;"[1] and it was said that "the Saviour was crucified in the whole world and in every soul;" and Christ, it was said, "was daily born, suffered, and died—that He hung from every tree."[2] A more local presence of our Lord upon earth even was accepted, but no true incarnation. "The light," says Manes,[3] "touched not the substance of the flesh, but was only shaded with a likeness and form of flesh." It was denied that Christ really took on Him human flesh, that He was born, or died, or rose again, or was circumcised, baptized, or tempted, or had any of the affections of a man. But the delivery which was assigned to Christ as a function was still the delivery from error and slavery, from enmity and from death. Though these expressions too receive a Manichæan sense from the interpretation of their uses elsewhere. They seem to mean only what Christ was and did as a teacher. "We cannot be reconciled," the Manichæan said,[4] "save through a *Master*, who is Christ Jesus." "We follow the true knowledge, and that knowledge restores the mind to the memory of its former state in the kingdom of light."[5]

But there was another exchange to be made before the compact of Manichæanism with Christianity was completed. When the Manichæan turned

[1] *Contra Faustum*, xx. 17. [2] *Ib.* xx. 2.
[3] *Epist. ad Zebenam* ap. Fabric. Bibl. Gr. v. 284.
[4] *Contra Fortunat.* 17. [5] *Ib.* 20.

his eye upon the spectacle of Christianity, he saw there a mighty and expansive future, but, in his view, a somewhat degraded and ignominious past. He could not tolerate the Old Testament Saints. The Patriarchs, the Judges, the Prophets, the Kings,—he regarded them all as simply involved in one charge of immorality, barbarism, fraud, and bloodshed. Their ways and mode of life were odious to him, and conflicted in the most marked way with the Oriental standard of sublimity and sanctity. He could not possibly understand how a high Saint could have many children, still less how a Patriarch could have several wives, and how a Judge, under the impulse of inspiration, could slay a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass. The freedom, the impulse, the impetus, not to say the irregularities of the Jewish saints more than perplexed him, they astounded, shocked, and disgusted him. He could not conceive how such men could stand at the root of that sacred stem which bore the Christian branches. Moses, in spite of the moral scope of his legislation, was intolerable to him; he inveighed against his cruelty, his judicial slaughters, his exterminations. Though an antagonist, upon his own Magian basis, to idolatry, Faustus, taking the part of the Canaanites against Moses, declared of him that—"humanorum nulli unquam divinorumque pepercerit."[1] He asserted that when our Lord said that all before Him were thieves and robbers, He referred to the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Testament.[2]

[1] *Contra Faustum*, xv. 1. "He spared nothing either human or divine."

[2] *Ib.* xvi. 12.

The Law, with its bloody rites, circumcision, and sacrifices, was denounced as only a form of paganism. Even the quiet and peaceful family life of the Jewish Patriarch was low in his eyes; it was enveloped in the chains of earth; it did not scale the heights of holy absorption, or mount up to the empyrean of mortified rapture. It did not at all embody, but seemed coarsely to contradict, the subtle Eastern type, which demanded as its first condition the separation from matter and the rejection of sense. The fiery proud spirituality of the Oriental religions put to shame the simplicity, humility, and practical temper of the Jewish saintly mind. The Manichæan could not imagine that such a life could be a chastised life. Though it is the experience of most people, when any peculiarly showy specimens of goodness have been before them in life, that some character less striking in outward effect has been really the best, this was not his conclusion. The Old Testament saints and prophets were not showy enough for him. What was to be done with such a spiritual ancestry? The large prospect of the Christian Church, its strong and vigorous present, were objects of ambition for the Manichæan to get hold of, but he could not accommodate his stomach to its low progenitors. Could he persuade it to give them up, and in the place of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Patriarchs and the Prophets, to adopt as spiritual forefathers—the Magi! For this was virtually the scope of the compact. It assumed the *form* indeed of disbelieving all the accounts of the Old Testament saints, and rejecting the whole of

the Bible narrative on that head :—" Puniantur scriptores, damnentur eorum libri, purgetur propheticum nomen indigna fama, gravitati atque censuræ suæ Patriarcharum reddatur auctoritas."[1] But if the actual recorded character of the Jewish saints was thus blotted out, and another substituted for it by an hypothesis; what must that substituted character be? It must of course be the one which as a Manichæan he considered was the proper character for saints to possess; or the sanctity of his own Magi. This was in fact, then, to say: You really cannot keep these Old Testament saints; I can assure you they do not do for you; they really are a discredit to you; you must change them; it will be a great improvement; attach the Magi to Christianity; they are real saints, and will make you forefathers of whom you need not be ashamed.

Now it is certainly an advantage which belongs to hypothetical spiritual ancestors, that their merits can be exalted to the utmost point of perfection without any fear of contradiction. This undescribed and unrecorded line of Jewish saints which was to oust the known recorded line, would have been supposed to possess all the highest qualifications of Eastern saints, and all the ascetic and contemplative virtues. And so to the Manichæan Faustus the exchange would have seemed a most happy one. But to us at the present day it is more than questionable whether the torpid,

[1] *Contra Faustum*, xxii. 3. " Let the writers be punished, let their books be condemned, let the name of the prophets be purified from the fame that degrades them, let the authority of the Patriarchs be restored to the sober and severe life that is truly theirs."

ascetic contemplativeness of the Eastern saint would have seemed a good exchange for the true and genuine form of character which belongs to the Old Testament saint,—its naturalness, its life, with all its irregularities; and whether it would not have appeared like a substitution of dead men for living ones.

It was indeed one of the principal weapons which the Manichæan controversialist wielded against Christianity—the character of the Old Testament saints; *i.e.*, the striking difference of moral standard in the Old Testament and the New. He made the very most of this, and threw in the face of Christians the actions of the Patriarchs, with an insolence which reminds one of the lowest ranges of modern controversy. The tone in which Faustus censures Abraham, Moses, the Judges, and David, is like that of the *National Reformer*. And when we meet Augustine afterwards as a champion and defender of the Jewish saint against Manichæanism, we can easily understand that this difficulty would have pressed upon him strongly when that system first gained him as a convert; and that the escape which the Manichæan offered from the moral difficulties of the Old Testament was among the principal attractions of his side of the argument; that it would have great influence upon youthful philosophical minds. The objections to Old Testament morals were upon the surface, the answer was indirect and roundabout.

Putting aside, then, the substantial part of the Manichæan controversy, that concerned with the dualistic basis of that religion, which Augustine refuted

upon the principles of the Old Testament revelation of one God of infinite power and goodness, let us attend to this offshoot, but still very important offshoot, of the subject, which had to do with the difficulty of Old Testament morality.

The answers of Augustine, then, to the Manichæan invectives against the Patriarchs and saints of the Old Testament, were characterised by that ingenuity which so marked his controversial treatment of subjects. "Those who raise these objections," he says, "against the actions of the Patriarchs, are like schoolboys, who would reprove their masters for some apparent grammatical mistake, which is no real mistake: for example, they know the rule that a noun singular cannot be joined with a verb ~~singular~~; and so when their teacher, who is most learned in the Latin tongue, repeats the line—'pars in frusta secant;' some boys would correct him, and say, 'No, not sec*ant*; it must be sec*at*.' And when he says '*Rel*ligione patrum,' they would say, 'No: *re*ligione, not *rel*ligione.' There is an analogy between these absurd corrections and the charges of these objectors. The virtues of great minds are sometimes like the faults of little minds. There is as much distance between the typical acts of the Prophets and the sensual sins of the wicked, as there is between the solecisms or barbarisms of tyros and the figures and metaplasms of grammarians."[1]

So again . . . "They"—Manichæan objectors to Old Testament morals—" are like to men who decry the utility of things, when they do not know what the

[1] *Contra Faustum*, xxii. 25.

things themselves are. As if a deaf man should see the lips moving of men talking, and should blame the superfluity and deformity of the motions; or as if a blind man put into a house, which he had heard much praised, should feel round with his hand to test the smoothness of the walls, and coming to windows, should find fault with their inconvenience, and suppose them to be ruinous holes."[1]

The typical aspect of Old Testament actions is strongly pressed by Augustine. But now we come to a solid and real defence, viz., that the Divine orders in the Old Testament to do actions which we think wrong now, are the necessary accommodation of the Divine policy, and with it of the Divine commands, to the circumstances and moral standard of the day. To the contrast drawn beween Patriarchs and Apostles he replies — "Nec valetis disumere consuetudinem temporis illius, quo promissio velabatur, a consuetudine temporis istius, quo promissio revelatur."[2] Why does Faustus object to the spoiling of the Egyptians? As if Moses would not have sinned had he not done it! "Deus enim jusserat qui utique novit . . . secundum *cor* hominis, quid unusquisque, vel per quem perpeti debeat. . . . Digni ergo erant et isti quibus talia *juberentur*, et illi qui talia paterentur."[3]

[1] *Contra Faustum*, xxii. 7.

[2] *Ib.* xxii. 71. "You are not able to discern between the custom of that time, when the promise was being veiled, and the custom of the (present) time in which the promise is revealed."

[3] *Ib.* xxii. 71. "For God had ordered it, who really knows . . . according to the state of man's heart what each ought to suffer, and at whose hands. . . . Therefore they were worthy for their part to receive such commands, and the others to suffer such treatment."

. . . And he adheres to the answer in spite of the objection raised that a true or good God could not have given such commands. . . . "Imo vero talia *recte* non jubet, *nisi* Deus Verus et Bonus, qui et solus novit quid cuique jubendum sit . . . solus novit quando, quibus, per quos fieri aliquid vel *jubeat* vel permittat."[1]

The extermination of the Canaanites was thus an instance of the execution, by means of human instruments (who were qualified by the carnal stage of mind through which they were then passing to be the recipients of such commands), of a great Divine principle that the kingdoms of idolaters were the property of the true God:—a principle which it was specially necessary to promulgate at that time: "Sed eam rerum dispensatum ae distributionem, temporum ordo poscebat, ut prius appareret etiam ipsa bona terrena . . . propter quæ maxime civitas impriorum diffusa per mundum supplicare idolis et dæmonibus solet, non nisi ad unius Dei veri potestatem atque arbitrium pertinere."[2] . . . Do not they understand, he says, this principle of Divine accommodation?—"Jamne intelligunt quemadmodum nulla inconstantia præcipien-

[1] *Contra Faustum*, xxii. 72. "Nay rather, none gives such commands *rightly* except the true and good God, who at once alone knows what commands each should receive . . . and who alone knows when, to whom, and by whose means, He should either *command* or permit anything to be done."

[2] *Ib.* 76. "But the order of time demanded this dispensation and distribution of things, that it should first appear that even earthly goods, for which the community of impious men diffused throughout the world is wont to make greatest supplication to idols and demons, are really only in the disposition and free will of the one true God."

tis, sed ratione dispensantis pro temporum diversitate, præcepte vel consilia vel permissa mutentur?"[1]

We are in this part of the Manichæan controversy introduced early into a difficult question, which has been a special subject of modern, and most particularly of very *recent* thought—I mean the difficulty of Old Testament morality—how God could give commands to persons to do the actions, which He *did* command in those ages. This has been a fertile subject of discussion in the present day, and it can hardly be said that any answer has even yet been arrived at in which there is general concurrence. Augustine appears to me to have struck out in a rough way what is the main answer to the difficulty, viz. that God gives commands in accommodation to the state of mind and moral standard of the recipients of them. . . . "Deus Verus et Bonus solus novit quid cuique jubendum sit . . . . novit secundum cor hominis, quid unusquisque, vel per quem perpeti debeat. . . . Digni ergo erant et isti quibus *talia juberentur*, et illi qui talia paterentur."[2] Here is involved the principle that God could, in a former age and to people of a lower moral standard, give commands to do actions, which we should think it wrong to do now. "Deus jubet secundum *cor* hominis . . . *digni* erant quibus talia juberentur." There was a certain inward want, an unenlightenment, a rudeness of moral conception, in

[1] *Contra Faustum*, xxii. 77. "Do they understand at last how precepts, or counsels, or permissions are changed, with no inconstancy in Him who gives them, but by the wisdom of Him who dispenses them according to the difference of the times?"

[2] *Ib.* 71, 72.

those to whom such commands were given; otherwise they would not have been given. God would not have given a command to slaughter a whole nation to an enlightened people: we cannot suppose Him, *e.g.*, giving such a command to us at the present day. "But when people were '*digni* quibus talia juberentur,' then God commanded '*secundum cor* hominis.'" When their moral standard was such as admitted of such a command being received by them as a Divine command, then the command was given, when in the Divine course of policy it was expedient that it should be given.

There is something natural in this answer; and if any one of ordinary understanding were asked in an ordinary way his idea of the explanation of such commands, he would most likely state it in this way. But when it has come to formal judgment in theological writing, something has prevented Divines from being willing to admit that God can *command* an action which, according to a perfect moral standard, is wrong. In their account of the Divine accommodation, they go as far as permission; but they stop with permission, and do not recognise the idea of God actually *commanding an action below our moral standard*, though on a level with the inferior moral standard of an early age. This element accordingly does not enter into Butler's explanation of these commands;[1] his explanation, *e.g.*, of the Divine command to destroy the Canaanites does not bring in, or avail itself at all of, the special defence or excuse of an in-

[1] See *ante*, p. 31.

ferior moral standard in the Jewish people of that age. His explanation rests entirely upon the Divine right to destroy life, and to communicate the intention to execute that right to the persons through whose instrumentality it was to be carried out. But this defence would apply as much to such a command given in the present day, as it would to a like command given in the age of Moses and Joshua. It does not rest on or avail itself of any distinction of moral standard existing between the two ages. And though Butler would doubtless acknowledge such a distinction as a *fact*, his *explanation* does without it.

Augustine's explanation distinctly avails itself of this element of defence, and expressly acknowledges the moral right of the Deity not only to permit, but to *command*, actions of imperfect morality, when the moral standard of the age does not rise above that level.

But while Augustine acknowledges the imperfect moral standard of the Patriarchal and Prophetic age, this does not in the least affect his estimate of the high sanctity and greatness of Patriarchs and Prophets themselves. Underneath the differences of special moral rules and ideas, in which they were at a disadvantage, and which were those of the age in which they lived, he sees a fundamental unity of general sanctity and greatness, and loftiness of character, which unites them with the Apostles and the highest saints of the New Testament. It is a difficult question in moral philosophy how far any man is lowered individually in moral character by the faults and

defective rules of his age. One sees a moral greatness in an individual which lies underneath the growth and progress of moral ideas in the race; which greatness is the same in a Patriarch that it is in an Apostle. We rest satisfied that there is this fundamental unity, in the moral character of Patriarch and Apostle, notwithstanding the variety of particular rules under which they lived,—which unity puts them on the same basis as religious men. With St. Augustine it is always—"Tantus Patriarcha, Pater Abraham, Sanctus vir Jacob, sancti Patriarchæ—quorum se Deum appellari voluit Deus."[1]

[1] *Contra Faustum*, xxii. 46, 47, 59.

APPENDIX.

Lecture I., Note 1, p. 1.

An inscription on the bricks of Mugheir seems to identify the god whom Terah worshipped, with the Moongod whose worship was established in the ancient Chaldæan capital (see Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. i. p. 365). The expression, "served other gods" evidently alludes to some decided form of idolatry. Some sort of superstitious use of images appears to have adhered to the family stock which Abraham left behind him in Haran at his second and solitary migration into Canaan, even after the first migration of the whole house from the other side the flood—from Ur of the Chaldees. When Rachel, a daughter of the branch at Haran, fled with Jacob from her father Laban, she stole "his gods," and "put the images in the camel's furniture."[1] And whatever the superstition was, it seems to have gone on surreptitiously for some time even among Jacob's own household; for on his journey to Bethel, he "said unto his household and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments."[2] But this corrupt use of images could hardly have been any formal system of idolatry; for the worship of the one God, as the open and established worship of Jacob's household, would have precluded this; nor, had the kindred left behind in Haran been formal idolaters, would there have been any reason for the family of Abraham so carefully maintaining the connection with them, and its heirs taking their wives exclusively from them, religiously avoiding the daughters of the people of the land. There would have been no religious ground for keeping up this marked distinction between the kindred at Haran and the Canaanites, had both worshipped false gods. This use of images is generally supposed to

[1] Gen. xxxi. 30, 34. [2] Gen. xxxv. 2.

have been connected with some practice of divination or some minor form of superstition, which was consistent with the regular worship of one God. But the forefathers of Abraham "served other gods," they were idolaters who paid to false gods that worship which was due to the one true God. The book of Judith follows the statement of Scripture. "This people (the Jews) are descended of the Chaldæans: and they sojourned heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, which were in the land of Chaldæa. For they left the way of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God whom they knew: so they cast them out from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and sojourned there many days. Then their God commanded them to depart from the place where they sojourned, and to go into the land of Chanaan."[1]

"Frequens et obvia est de ea re apud veteres historia; sed vereor ut suam satis liberent fidem, qui tam constanter de rebus tam priscis sententiam proferunt. Tradunt sane Ebræi statuarium fuisse Tharam, atque eandem cum eo aliquandiu exercuisse artem Abrahamum. Et legitur Sacris Literis Tharam, et patres ei contemporaneos, alienos Deos coluisse, quod in Josuæ cap. xxiv. com. 2 reperitur. Quod ansam forte præbuit, ut idolatriæ initia ei deberi posteri censerent. Abrahamum item in ardentem fornacem a Nimrodo conjectum, cum idolorum cultum detrectaret, scribunt. Id præter vulgo tritos scriptores habet Chaldæus paraphrastes in Ecclesiastem cap. iv. com. 13 sed vix est ut parentalia seu feriarum denicalium sacra tam celeri in divinos honores transitu, quam brevia ævi inter Sheruchum et Tharam intervalla proposcerint, demutarentur. At vero Chaldaica illa paraphrasi, Uzielidi tributa, etiam locus ille Mosis, qui quartum Genesis caput claudit de idolis, capitur perinde ac si diu etiam ante diluvium coli cœpissent, circa annum nempe a mundi conditu ducentisimum quadragesimum."[2]

"Imagines illas quas furata est Rahel, Ebræi vocant *Teraphim*, Gen. cap. xxxi. comm. 19. Pro Diis esse habitas, testis est ipse Laban, *Quare*, inquit ille, *furatus es Deos meos?* Jacobum adlocutus. Fictas eas ab astrologis, ut futura prædicerent, sentit R. D. Kimchi, et humana forma factas, ita ut cœlestis influentiæ essent

[1] Chap. v. 6-9.

[2] Selden, vol. ii. p. 238.

capaces, adnotat Abraham Aben Ezra theologus et astrologus Judæorum maximus; atque ad eam mentem interpretatur *Teraphim* quæ pro liberando Davide, in lecto posuit Michal uxor ejus, de qua historia est 1 Sam. cap. 19. Inter causas etiam, cur Rahel eas sustulerit, hanc unam recensent, ne scilicet Labani illarum inspectione innotesceret, per quod iter illa abierat. Ideo D. Augustinus Quæst. xciv. in Genesim. *Quod Laban*, inquit, *dicit, Quare furatus es Deos meos? hinc est illud fortasse quod et augurari se dixerat.* Imo et Aben Ezra augurium illud ad Teraphim Labanis refert. Utrum autem ut Dii colerentur Teraphim, utcunque Dii dicti, an vero divinationis tantum instrumenta haberentur; vetus est inter magistros controversia."[1]

Lecture III., Note 2, p. 74.

Warburton's great theory of the sacrifice of Isaac is based upon the Scriptural account of that sacrifice, as undertaken with the full expectation of the restoration of the victim to life; but he raises upon this basis a bold superstructure of his own, for which it is not easy to find equal Scripture warrant,—the theory, viz., that the sacrifice was a *scenical* representation, a representation by action of the Atonement and Resurrection of Christ, and a revelation of the Gospel scheme to Abraham. The whole subject of teaching by action, which prevailed in antiquity, and is adopted in Scripture, is discussed and elucidated by Warburton. To Jeremiah it is said,—"Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck;"[2] to Hosea,—"Go, take thee a wife of whoredoms;"[3] to Ezekiel,—"Prepare thee stuff for removing,"[4] etc. This was information by action instead of words. The Almighty, by the first of these actions, indicating the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar over Edom, Moab, etc.; by the second, declaring His abhorrence of the idolatries of the house of Israel; by the third, foretelling the approaching captivity of Zedekiah. And thus Ahijah rent his garment into twelve pieces, of which he gave Jeroboam ten, to signify the secession of the ten tribes.[5] The

[1] Selden, vol. ii. p. 279.

[2] Jer. xxvii. 2.

[3] Hos. i. 2.

[4] Ezek. xii. 3.

[5] 1 Kings xi. 29, 30.

sacrifice of Abraham then was, according to Warburton, an example of the same manner of teaching. The offering up of Isaac, in which the real death of that victim was contemplated, combined with the event of his son's restoration, revealed to the Patriarch the Atonement and the Resurrection. Substantial action was at the same time scenic representation. The information, he supposes, had been solicited by Abraham; and "the father of the faithful must, from the nature of the thing, become very desirous of knowing the manner how this blessing [*In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed*] was to be brought about. A Mystery, if we will believe the Author of our Faith, that engaged the attention of other holy men, less concerned than Abraham, and consequently less stimulated and excited by their curiosity: 'And he turned unto his disciples, and said . . . For I tell you, that many prophets and kings [and much more Abraham, must] have desired to see those things which ye see,'"[1] etc. (Luke x. 23, 24).

And the text,—"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day," is adduced as proof that the information thus solicited by Abraham beforehand had been promised to him,—the argument being that the Greek word for rejoiced—ἠγαλλιάσατο—signifies "the tumultuous pleasure which the expectation of an actually approaching blessing occasions." So convinced, indeed, is Warburton that Abraham received information by action of the great events of the Gospel, that he accounts for the knowledge not having been divulged, but having been concealed by the Patriarch.

But such a theory as this encounters great and insuperable objections. Warburton explains, indeed, the total silence of the Old Testament about this communication to Abraham, by saying that it would have been contrary to the Divine scheme to have recorded a revelation which would have indisposed the Jewish nation to the preparatory discipline of the Law. And he answers the objection, that the command to sacrifice Isaac is plainly described in Scripture not as the vouchsafement of a singular privilege, but as a trial and temptation, by saying that the privilege was granted upon the condition of and by means of a trial; that Abraham having requested to know the mode in which the blessing would

[1] *Divine Legation.* Book vi. § 5.

be accomplished, the answer was, Offer up Isaac, and it shall be revealed to you. But the fact still remains, that Scripture is altogether silent about this communication to Abraham, and that therefore the supposition is wholly gratuitous and without foundation. The whole proof, indeed, of this supposed revelation to Abraham rests upon that single text in the New Testament,—"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad;" but it is an extravagant strain upon this text to extort this meaning out of it. "To see my day" is an indefinite expression, which does not necessarily mean more than that Abraham looked forward to the time when the Divine promise would be fulfilled, and that sublime gift in which all the nations of the earth were interested would be actually bestowed.

One consequence of Warburton's adoption of a peculiar theory of the sacrifice of Abraham was a bad one—viz., that he defended that sacrifice by the shield of his own theory, and not by the simple statement of Scripture. To confute the notion that it was a propitiatory human sacrifice, in imitation of Canaanitish worship, the statement of Scripture was enough,—viz., that he who had received the promise "That in Isaac shall thy seed be called," offered him up, "accounting that God was able *to raise him up, even from the dead.*" It was of the very nature of propitiatory sacrifices that they contemplated the loss of the victim, but Abraham did not contemplate the loss of Isaac. But Warburton prefers resting the defence of Abraham's sacrifice against the charge of being a propitiatory human sacrifice, upon the ground that the sacrificial action in it was only scenical representation to reveal to Abraham the sacrifice of Christ. "This action being mere scenery, had *no moral import;* that is, it conveyed or implied none of those *intentions* in Him who commanded it, and in him who obeyed the command, which go along with actions that have *a moral import.* Consequently, the injunction and obedience, in an action which hath no such import, can no way affect the moral character of the persons concerned: and consequently, this command could occasion no mistakes concerning the Divine Attributes, with regard to God's delighting in human sacrifices."[1] The defence is good, were the fact of the scenical representation certain; the latter, however, is no more than a theory, and is

[1] *Divine Legation*, vi. 5.

therefore a weak substitute for a Scripture statement. But though Warburton erects a superstructure of uncertain theory on this subject, the groundwork of his view is true and Scriptural—viz. that Abraham offered up Isaac, not with the idea of losing him, but with the full expectation of the recovery of the heir of the promise.

Lecture V., Note 3, p. 121.

This is from a passage on the subject of punishment on the didactic principle. We say that punishment for the fathers' sins is punishment on that principle, and we call it vicarious punishment,—regarding it as being on that principle and not on the judicial principle. I hear that certain persons are selected by their relationship to others to be instances of the consequences of sin. Now this is very clear of those who are thus didactically punished on account of their fathers' sins. But Tucker points out, and with great truth, that it is not only true of those persons who are punished on account of their fathers' sins, who make this a marked and definite class; but that it is true of numbers of men everywhere who are singled out for this use and purpose of didactic punishment. Everywhere we see persons who are singled out for providential inflictions, for the purpose of impressing others, reminding them of the consequences of connection with sin,—whether it is the sin of a father or of a governor, of a political or a military leader, does not signify. These men are singled out for didactic punishment. They are not worse than other men in themselves; and therefore so far their punishment upon the didactic principle is a *vicarious* one—it is in fact suffered for the benefit and instruction of others, and for the good of society. As Tucker says:—"It is not so much actual suffering, as the terror of it, that operates upon free will;" but there must be some actual suffering to *produce* this terror. And some must submit to this suffering by visitation of Providence; constituting an indefinite and constantly seen class. We have, in fact, vicarious punishment of a didactic kind illustrated and exemplified everywhere, not only in those who suffer for their fathers' sins, but in persons who are visited by Providence generally. The punishment for fathers' sins is brought under a more

general head, and is only one specimen of a large and comprehensive system.

Now this being the case, Tucker goes off into another point as to how justice is to be satisfied with this kind of didactic vicarious punishment, some people being visited by Providence for the instruction of others, when they are not worse in themselves than others. And the general *fact* that it is so may be allowed, while it may be difficult to explain the rationale of its justice. And Mr. Tucker may have stated the fact rightly, and may have rather missed a rationale. When we come across the fact, indeed, a man says, I object to this fact: I object to being made an example of didactic punishment for the instruction of others. Say, I am one of the host of Pharaoh that was overthrown in the Red Sea for an example. How is this treatment justified? Tucker then seems to admit that he has a grievance, but thinks he sees a way out of it. He tells the man—"In this light of punishment it appears that the party undergoing it does a signal service to his fellow creatures, by exhibiting to them an example of utmost importance; and necessary to preserve them in happiness: for which service I see nothing in our ideas of a gracious Governor that should hinder His *making him amends.*"[1] He then supposes some arrangements made in a future life to meet the case. But this is loose and rough speculation. Yet the fact of *vicarious didactic punishment*, it will be allowed, may be separated from the particular form of it exhibited as a visitation for fathers' sins, and may be considered as a *general* law taking place here. Indeed, when we look abroad in the world, how much we see of great masses of providential visitation, which look like didactic punishment of some kind or other,—punishment meant to arrest our attention, though not judicial with respect to individuals! A great battle arrests our attention, and we think it must be meant to be reflected on. The pride and ambition of nations produces terrible punishment. Numbers of individuals are not implicated in this public pride and ambition,—still we cannot help seeing that this *fate* is congenial to this public vice and stain, of kings and statesmen. The whole is a lesson, and has a moral effect.

[1] Tucker's *Light of Nature*, vol. iv. p. 396.

Lecture VI., Note 4, p. 143.

Rahab's act was the saving of two believers in the true God, whereas Jael's was the destruction of an enemy of God; but *deception* was common to both acts.[1] The whole statement in answer to the king of Jericho's demand for the two spies was false, the two men being at the very time on the roof of the house hid with the stalks of flax. St. James, however,[2] says that Rahab "was justified by works," and that this very concealment of the messengers was the work which justified her. Scott's comment is—"Various opinions have been formed concerning Rahab's conduct on this trying occasion. Some object that her treachery to her king and country cannot be vindicated; but it may be answered, that as she firmly believed the God of heaven had devoted the Canaanites to be utterly destroyed by the Israelites, she must either side with Israel and Israel's God against her country, or perish with it in a hopeless contest against the Almighty: so that, *in her circumstances*, she could not have acted otherwise, if influenced by a true and living faith. . . . In respect of the falsehoods that she uttered . . . if it were her indispensable duty if possible to protect the spies, and there were no other conceivable way of obeying this, it seems not necessary to condemn her conduct altogether. Stratagems of war, and similar impositions upon determined enemies and persecutors, are not absolutely condemned in Scripture, though inconsistent with exact veracity."[3] Bacon, in his tract "*On Church Controversies*," speaking of certain enthusiastic preachers of his day, says—"In this kind of zeal, they have pronounced generally, and without difference, all untruths unlawful; notwithstanding, that the midwives are directly reported to have been blessed for their excuse, and Rahab is said by faith to have concealed the spies."[4]

Lecture VII., Note 5, p. 172.

However justly Dante offends modern commentators, it is clear that he did not outrage the conscience of his own age, character-

[1] Josh. ii. 4, 5. [2] James ii. 25. [3] Scott's *Bible*. Joshua ii. 4.
[4] Bacon's *Works*, Ed. 1819, vol. ii. p. 520. Exod. i. 9; 2 Sam. xvi. 18, 19; 2 Kings vi. 19.

ised as it was by bitter enmities, when he treats an inmate of the Inferno as a proper subject for deception; as having no right to truth. In the circle of traitors, who are plunged up to the head in a frozen lake,—where tears on the upturned face freeze before they fall, thus forming a crystal vizor of ice,—he is accosted by Frate Alberigo, who had murdered his guests at a banquet. Alberigo, mistaking him and Virgil for guilty spirits on the way to their doom in the lowest circle, thus piteously accosts them:—(*Inferno*, Canto xxxiii. 110.)

"O ánime crudeli
Tanto, che data v' è l' ultima posta
Levatemi dal viso i duri veli.
Si ch'io sfoghi il dolór che' l cuor m' impregna
Un poco, pria che il piánto si raggiéli."

["O souls so cruel that for you is sealed
The doom of the lowest gulf!" so crying prayed me
One of the sad ones of the crust congealed;
"Lift from my sight the hardened veil, and aid me,
To vent the sorrow through my heart extending,
A little ere the frost again invade me."]

Dante answers readily:—

"Perch' io à lui: Se vuoi ch' i ti sovvegna,
Dimmi chi se': e s' io non ti disbrigo,
Al fondo della ghiaccia ir mi convegna."

[Then I, "If thou would'st have me succour lending,
Say who thou wast; and if thou art deceived,
Down to the lowest ice be my descending."]

He knew himself bound to the icy bottom under the care of his guide, and in fact plays upon the traitor's misapprehension, who accepts the conditions; and declaring himself,—"I am the Friar Alberigo,"—tells his tale, and calls for the fulfilment of the promise,—

"Ma distendi oramái in quà la mano
Aprimi gli occhi:"

[But stretch out now thy hand, and
open my eyes.]

"Ed io non glieli apersi
E cortesia fu lui esser villano."

[And I opened them not for him, and to
be rude to him was courtesy.]

LECTURE VII., NOTE 6, p. 175.

FROM this deceit of *esprit de corps* to benefit a clan, or tribe, or party, or cause, we go to deceit for another object, viz. in execution of justice. A man has exposed himself to death for the crime of bloodshed, and another man has it imposed upon him, as a sacred function, to secure justice and kill him. This is the law of Goel; it may happen that the law can only be carried out by stratagem and deceit; and when these are necessary the avenger of blood must use them. The Arabian character, then, is described as generous and courageous, noble and frank in all the ordinary relations, but the tactics which the law of Goel imposes on it try its fidelity to these features, and engraft upon the main stock of the character some special and occasional modes of action which are very opposite; we find conspicuous untruthfulness, treachery, and double-dealing, but it is still an insertion in the general portrait of a noble-minded and magnanimous man. In the very fulfilment of the law of Goel he undertakes danger for the sake of duty, and sacrifices himself for a sacred object. It is only when killing has been imposed as a duty, that the discharge from the obligation of truth has been considered to go with it:—it ought to be said the prohibition to speak the truth, the obligation to deceive. In proportion to the sanctity which attached to the office of avenger of blood, and to the obligation which lay upon him to pursue the man guilty of homicide to death, was also the strength of the conviction in the avenger's mind, that he had the right, or rather the duty to put aside all the ordinary rules of sincerity and truth-speaking in the means he adopted for accomplishing his end. Extreme deceit was allowed, or rather imposed on him, when it was necessary; because it was supposed that the duty of taking away life superseded the right to truth-speaking. The use of such tactics in an exceptional case, then, implied no general tendency to dissimulation and treachery in the man; they were a special instrument for a special end, and were totally different from meanness in the character.

The whole moral sentiment of the East has utterly cashiered, within the direct sphere of the duty of slaying, the duty of veracity. The slayer, while he is under the direct obligation to kill a man, is under no obligation to truth; but considers that as

the man is the fitting object of assassination, he is the fitting victim of deceit and dissimulation. Michaelis, in his *Arabic Chrestomathy*, which he quotes in his Commentary on the Laws of the Hebrews, relates stories of the Arabs which show how completely, in the execution of the sacred task of avenger of blood, the Arab discards the whole ordinary duty of veracity, and adopts the most intricate and elaborate arts of deceit and duplicity to get hold of the manslayer whose life has become a solemn forfeit to him which he is bound to secure. The most honourable Arab is under an obligation in this instance to use every piece of dissimulation which can promote his end, and bring the guilty man within his grasp.

"Hatim, the father, and Adi, the grandfather, of Kais had both been murdered; but as that happened before Kais was capable of reflection, his mother kept it a secret from him, that he might not at any future period meditate revenge, and thereby expose his own life to danger. In order to guard against his having any suspicions, or making any inquiries as to their deaths, she collected a parcel of stones on two hillocks in the neighbourhood, that they might have the appearance of burial-places, and told her son, that the one was the grave of his father, the other of his grandfather. Kais had of course no other idea than that his progenitors had died natural deaths, and were there buried . . . . Kais had a quarrel with another young Arab, and received from him this bitter taunt, "You would do better to show your courage on the murderer of your father and grandfather." These words spoke much and deeply to his heart; he became melancholy; and threatened his mother with killing either her or himself, if she did not tell him the whole truth relative to the deaths of his father and grandfather. He thus extorted the secret from her; and immediately set out on a peregrination, to which I cannot apply a more proper phrase, than our common one, of going in quest of adventures. He went to a distant part of the country, in quest of a man named Chidasch, a friend of his father's, and whom he knew to have been indebted to his father on the score of gratitude—for that too enters into an Arab's idea of honour, barbarous as it otherwise is. When he found him out, he at first entered his house merely as a stranger, according to the Arabian laws of hospi-

tality. The wife of Chidasch immediately observed something in his face, which led her to ask whether he was not going to avenge blood. Chidasch himself recognised in him a likeness to his friend, and after a short conversation, Kais told him wherefore he was come. Chidasch was somewhat perplexed; for one of the murderers was his own uncle: but he told Kais, that although he would fain put the murderer into his hands, he could not do it openly, but that he had only to mark his procedure next night, when he would set himself down by the murderer, and give him a blow familiarly, and in jest, upon which signal he, Kais, might kill him himself, and trust to him for protection against all retaliation from the family. This was agreed upon; Chidasch betrayed his uncle by the preconcerted signal; Kais killed him; and when the family threatened vengeance, Chidasch apologised for him, and said he had done nothing more than put his father's murderer to death. They then set off both together for the province of Heger, or Baharein, on the Persian Gulf, where the murderer of his grandfather dwelt. Chidasch hid himself behind a sandhill, and Kais went up to the murderer, and after complaining to him that a robber had attacked him among the sandhills, and taken his property from him, requested that he would help him to recover it. According to the prevailing maxims of honour and valour among the Arabs, he could not refuse the stranger's request, and immediately commanded some of his people to attend him. This, however, did not suit Kais's view, whose countenance instantly betrayed the appearance of a smile; and on the other asking him why he laughed, replied, "With us no brave man would take so many people to his aid, but would rather come alone." The man was ashamed, and ordered his people back, which was what Kais wanted. And when they got a sight of the pretended robber among the sandhills, and the man was about to attack him, Kais stabbed his succourer through the body from behind. And this base and treacherous procedure is immortalised by a poem, which exactly suits the national taste of the Arabs. So completely did the avengement of blood justify and extol, as brave and honourable, everything which we would account infamous, and characteristic of a ruffian."[1]

[1] *Commentary on the Laws of the Hebrews*, Book iii. art. 134.

This then is another purpose for which a lawful use was assigned to treachery among rude people, viz. the execution of justice. As a means of securing justice and the capture of criminals, treachery was completely and boldly justified; and Jael's act had a strong alliance with this form and use of treachery. Sisera was a criminal flying from the righteous justice of God; she arrests his flight by false promises, and engages him to accept hospitality within her tent. It is the same dissimulation which the law of Goel adopts, only applied to a different type of criminal. And like the deceit employed under the law of Goel, it is not a general habit of deceit so much as a local habit confined to a special set of circumstances, and justified by the previous obligation to slay.

Lecture VII., Note 7, p. 178.

The comparison between an earlier and a later age is presented in the case of Lord Clive and his Indian administration; and a long contest between two rival principles received a decisive settlement in English opinion. The great Indian statesman had been under the dominion of the false principle of retaliation, as a just mode of action under the difficulties of Indian administration. It seemed necessary to meet fraud by fraud, the gross chicanery of the Hindu by counter-trick. Simple honesty appeared but a weak instrument to bring to bear against subtle and inveterate deceit. Was it anything more on the part of an English statesman, than to do justice to himself, when he resisted one flagrant imposition by another? "All was going well," says Lord Macaulay, "when Clive learned that Omichund was likely to play false. The artful Bengalee had been promised a liberal compensation for all that he had lost at Calcutta. But this would not satisfy him. His services had been great. He held the thread of the whole intrigue. By one word breathed into the ear of Surajah Dowlah, he could undo all that he had done. The lives of Watts, of Meer Jaffier, of all the conspirators, were at his mercy; and he determined to take advantage of his situation, and to make his own terms. He demanded three hundred thousand pounds sterling as the price of his secrecy and of his assistance. The committee, incensed by the treachery and ap-

palled by the danger, knew not what course to take. But Clive was more than Omichund's match in Omichund's own arts. The man, he said, was a villain. Any artifice which would defeat such knavery was justifiable. The best course would be to promise what was asked. Omichund would soon be at their mercy; and then they might punish him by withholding from him, not only the bribe which he now demanded, but also the compensation which all the other sufferers of Calcutta were to receive.

"His advice was taken. But how was the wary and sagacious Hindu to be deceived? He had demanded that an article touching his claims should be inserted in the treaty between Meer Jaffier and the English, and he would not be satisfied unless he saw it with his own eyes. Clive had an expedient ready. Two treaties were drawn up, one on white paper, the other on red, the former real, the latter fictitious. In the former Omichund's name was not mentioned; the latter, which was to be shown to him, contained a stipulation in his favour.

"But another difficulty arose. Admiral Watson had scruples about signing the red treaty. Omichund's vigilance and acuteness were such that the absence of so important a name would probably awaken his suspicions. But Clive was not a man to do anything by halves. We almost blush to write it. He forged Admiral Watson's name. . . .

"The new sovereign was now called upon to fulfil the engagements into which he had entered with his allies. A conference was held at the house of Jugget Seit, the great banker, for the purpose of making the necessary arrangements. Omichund came thither fully believing himself to stand high in the favour of Clive, who, with dissimulation surpassing even the dissimulation of Bengal, had up to that day treated him with undiminished kindness. The white treaty was produced and read. Clive then turned to Mr. Scrafton, one of the servants of the Company, and said in English, 'It is now time to undeceive Omichund.' 'Omichund,' said Mr. Scrafton in Hindostanee, 'the red treaty is a trick. You are to have nothing.' Omichund fell back insensible into the arms of his attendants. He revived; but his mind was irreparably ruined. Clive, who, though little troubled by scruples of conscience in his dealings with Indian politicians, was not inhuman, seems to have been touched. He saw Omichund a

few days later, spoke to him kindly, advised him to make a pilgrimage to one of the great temples of India, in the hope that change of scene might restore his health, and was even disposed, notwithstanding all that had passed, again to employ him in the public service. But from the moment of that sudden shock, the unhappy man sank gradually into idiocy. He, who had formerly been distinguished by the strength of his understanding and the simplicity of his habits, now squandered the remains of his fortune on childish trinkets, and loved to exhibit himself dressed in rich garments, and hung with precious stones. In this abject state he languished a few months, and then died." [1]

This policy has received a defence from the old school of statesmen, represented by the great statesman who practised it; but it has been utterly unable to stand its ground before public opinion; and the verdict of the whole of English thought has been that no amount of Hindu dishonesty is any justification of our own. "That honesty is the best policy," says Lord Macaulay, "is a maxim which we firmly believe to be generally correct, even with respect to the temporal interests of individuals; but, with respect to societies, the rule is subject to still fewer exceptions, and that for this reason, that the life of societies is longer than the life of individuals. It is possible to mention men who have owed great worldly prosperity to breaches of private faith. But we doubt whether it be possible to mention a State which has on the whole been a gainer by a breach of public faith. The entire history of British India is an illustration of the great truth that it is not prudent to oppose perfidy to perfidy, and that the most efficient weapon with which men can encounter falsehood is truth. During a long course of years, the English rulers of India, surrounded by allies and enemies whom no engagement could bind, have generally acted with sincerity and uprightness; and the event has proved that sincerity and uprightness are wisdom. English valour and English intelligence have done less to extend and to preserve our Oriental empire than English veracity. All that we could have gained by imitating the doublings, the evasions, the fictions, the perjuries which have been employed against us, is as nothing, when compared with what we have gained by being the one power in India on whose word reliance can be placed.

[1] Macaulay's *Article on Lord Clive.*

No oath which superstition can devise, no hostage, however precious, inspires a hundredth part of the confidence which is produced by the 'yea, yea,' and 'nay, nay,' of a British envoy."[1]

Lecture IX., Note 8, p. 201.

"I must now speak (says Michaelis) of a person quite unknown in our law, but very conspicuous in the Hebrew law, and in regard to whom Moses has left us, I might almost say, an unexampled proof of legislative wisdom. In German, we may call him by the name which Luther so happily employs, in his version of the Bible, Der Bluträcher, the blood-avenger; and by this name we must here understand 'the nearest relation of a person murdered, whose right and duty it was to seek after and kill the murderer with his own hand; so much so, indeed, that the neglect thereof drew after it the greatest possible infamy, and subjected the man who avenged not the death of his relation to unceasing reproaches of cowardice or avarice.' If, instead of this description, the reader prefer a short definition, it may be to this effect; 'the nearest relation of a person murdered, whose right and duty it was to avenge his kinsman's death with his own hand.' Among the Hebrews this person was called גאל, Goël, according, at least, to the pronunciation adopted from the pointed Bibles. The etymology of this word, like most forensic terms, is as yet unknown. Yet we cannot but be curious to find out whence the Hebrews had derived the name, which they applied to a person so peculiar to their own law, and so totally unknown to ours. Unquestionably the verb גאל, Gaal, means to *buy off, ransom, redeem;* but this signification it has derived from the noun; for originally it meant *to pollute* or *stain.*

"If I might here mention a conjecture of my own, *Goel of blood* (for that is the term at full length) implies *blood-stained;* and the nearest kinsman of a murdered person was considered as stained with his blood, until he had, as it were, washed away the stain, and revenged the death of his relation. The name, therefore, indicates a person who continued in a state of dishonour, until he again rendered himself honourable, by the exercise and accomplishment of revenge; and in this very light do the Arabs regard

[1] Macaulay's *Article on Lord Clive.*

the kinsman of a person murdered. It was no doubt afterwards used, in a more extensive sense, to signify the nearest relation in general, and although there was no murder in the case; just as in all languages words are gradually extended far beyond their etymological meaning. . . . In Arabic writings, this word occurs ten times for once that we meet with Goel in Hebrew; for the Arabs, among whom the point of honour and heroic celebrity consists entirely in the revenge of blood, have much more to say of their blood-avenger than the Hebrews; among whom, Moses, by the wisdom of his laws, brought this character, in a great measure, into oblivion. . . . .

"Moses found the *Goel* already instituted, and speaks of him in his laws as a character perfectly known, and therefore unnecessary to be described; at the same time that he expresses his fear of his frequently shedding innocent blood. But long before he has occasion to mention him as the avenger of murder, he introduces his name in his laws relative to land, as in Lev. xxv. 25, where he gives him the right of redeeming a mortgaged field. . .

"The only book that is possibly more ancient than the Mosaic law, namely the book of Job, compares God, who will re-demand our ashes from the earth, with the Goël, chap. xix. 25. From this term the verb גאל, which otherwise signifies properly *to pollute*, had already acquired the significations of *redeeming*, *setting free*, *vindicating*, in which we find Moses often using it, before he ever speaks of the blood-avenger, as in Gen. xlviii. 15; Exod. vi. 6 . . .; and even re-purchase itself, is, in Lev. xxv. 31, 32, thence termed גאלה *geulla*. Derivatives in any language follow their primatives, but very slowly; and when *verba denominativa* descend from terms of law, the law itself must be ancient.

". . . . Mahomet endeavoured to mitigate this law, which was often dangerous to innocence; but unfortunately he began at the wrong end. For, instead of enjoining a previous investigation, that an innocent person might not suffer instead of the guilty, he recommended as an act of mercy, pleasing in the sight of God, the acceptance of a pecuniary compensation from the actual murderer, in lieu of revenge. His words are: 'In cases of murder, retaliation is prescribed to the faithful, so that freeman must die for freeman, slave for slave, wife for wife. But when a man's nearest kinsman departs from that right, he has a just

claim against the murderer for a moderate compensation in money, the acceptance of which is an alleviation of the crime in the sight of God, and an act of mercy. But if he afterwards oversteps this rule,' (that is by killing the person to whom he has remitted the murder), 'God will punish him severely. For the security of your lives rests on the right of retaliation.'—(See chap. ii. of the *Koran*, v. 173-175.)

"In this strange law, which, in fact, makes the right of retaliation quite ineffectual to the security of a man's life, because it can be compounded for by the payment of money to his kinsman, Mahomet manifests a much greater opposition to the national maxims of honour than a wise legislator would have done, by representing as merciful, and pleasing to God, a practice which to be sure was not uncommon, but still was deemed base and selfish. . . . But on the principles of sound philosophy, such a transaction is by no means acceptable in the sight of God, who commands murderers to be punished without mercy, that men's lives may be secure; and an Arab, bred up in the national ideas of honour, must always have had a stronger inclination to trespass a precept of his religion, thus half left to his option, than to forfeit his honour. I remember a passage of an Arabian poet, who lived before Mahomet, which describes cowards in the following terms: 'Those who injure them they forgive, and to the wicked they repay good for evil: men so pious as they are, God has not created among all the human race besides. But give me the man who, when he mounts his horse or camel, is furious in attacking his enemy.' . . . Now where poems of such a nature express the sentiments of a nation, a precept of false morality, recommending mercy and forgiveness in the wrong place, could scarcely have much influence, except with a few enthusiasts, who might happen to be among the people, and whose belief of religion was very ardent.

"No doubt, in those countries without the bounds of Arabia, where the people had not the same ideas of honour in avenging blood, and where the Mahomedan religion, which its victorious adherents propagated by the sword, was adopted only from terror, as in Persia for instance, such an admonition might have an influence on the law. Chardin, in his *Travels*, relates that in that country, when a person is murdered, his relations go before

a court of justice, making a great outcry, and demanding that the murderer be delivered up to them, that they may satiate their revenge; and that he is accordingly delivered up to them by the judge, in these words: 'I give this murderer into your hands; take satisfaction yourselves for the blood he has shed; but remember that God is just and merciful;' which manifestly allude to the two passages above-quoted from the Koran,—the relations may then, if they please, put him to death, and that in whatever way they think fit. A rich murderer, on the other hand, endeavours to accommodate matters with the relations of the murdered person, and to prevail on them to accept a pecuniary compensation; and the judge, to whom he also gives money, exhorts them to mercy, that is to be satisfied with such a compensation, although he cannot compel them to accept it."[1]

[1] Michaelis' *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses*, Book iii. Arts. 131, 134, 136.

Printed by R. & R. Clark, *Edinburgh.*